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Cops close in on driver in hit-and-run

FATALITY More than five months after an Ottawa man was killed while crossing Colonel By Drive at Rideau Street, police believe they have identified the driver in the hit-and-run collision.

Police said last night they have identified the driver of the red Mazda RX8 sought in the July 13 hit-and-run collision that took the life of Mitchell Anderson, 38.

A red Mazda RX8 struck and critically injured Anderson, who was homeless, as he crossed Colonel By Drive at around 11:16 p.m.

Anderson was on his way to meet his 17-year-old daughter after her shift ended at an Elgin Street fast-food restaurant.

He succumbed to his injuries at the Ottawa Hospital's Civic campus later that week.

With the help of witnesses, collision unit investigators confirmed that the vehicle was driven by a male with a female passenger.

TRACEY TONG/METRO OTTAWA

Gift Guide pg 24

Techies need good gifts, too

Food pg 32

Tasty seasonal delights

Local pg 3

Expect a white Christmas

Halifax MacKay digs the Canada Games

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO CANADA

Nova Scotia's Minister of Health Promotion Barry Barnet, from middle left, Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly and federal Defence Minister Peter MacKay turn some sod for the official ground-breaking ceremony for the Mainland Common Centre in Halifax yesterday. The $50.5-million centre will be ready for the 2011 Canada Winter Games.

A soldier's burden

Report says post-traumatic stress still a major problem

It took him a long time to recover from those words.

After hearing family members tell him he had changed from the fun-loving guy he used to be — and a threat from his wife to get help or get out — Chuck Marazzo finally worked up the courage to tell his military boss about the angry outbursts and hyper-vigilance he had been experiencing.

"When I went to talk to my higher-ups — my sergeant major — he just told me I was weak and, you know, to deal with it," Marazzo, 50, said yesterday from his home in Kilworth, Ont., as he recalled a conversation he had in 1997 before being released from the Canadian Forces for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"It took a lot of years to get over just that statement, because sometimes living with the stigma is worse than living with the injury itself," said Marazzo, whose 21-year career took him from Cyprus to Rwanda.

The stigma surrounding mental illness remains one of the greatest challenges facing the Canadian Forces today, the military ombudsman said in a report on operational stress injuries released yesterday.

"It is clear that stereotypes and stigma associated with operational stress injuries still remain a real problem," ombudsman Mary McFadyen told reporters yesterday. "Cultural change is needed and that must come from the top."

Based on interviews with more than 360 current and former military members suffering from PTSD or other operational stress injuries, the report concluded some military personnel were not diagnosed properly or getting the treatment they need.

"The consequences for individuals who fall through the cracks are often devastating and long lasting," McFadyen wrote in the 62-page report.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Recommendations not implemented

- The report is a followup to a devastating 2002 assessment of operational stress injuries and notes that while there has been progress, 18 of the 31 recommendations from the initial report have not been fully implemented.

ShareYourViews
ottawaletters@metronews.ca

Union says money the issue

TIM WIECLAWSKI
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TRANSIT The city's proposed changes to the scheduling system for OC Transpo drivers has nothing to do with improving public safety or their quality of life, a union spokesperson said yesterday.

In response to Mayor Larry O'Brien's comments on Tuesday that scheduling was a public safety concern, Randy Graham, international vice-president of the Amalgamated Transit Union, said the scheduling changes were proposed only to save money.

"I don't know why he thinks it's unsafe," said Graham. "We have a wonderful safety record for bus operators, and have for the last 100 years."

There is no new movement between the city and the union representing OC Transpo employees as the transit strike enters its ninth day.

Graham said they are not willing accept the city's schedule changes because it would force drivers to work any shift within a 13.5-hour spread.

Under the current scheduling system, bus operators can volunteer to work shifts that end 12 hours after the driver started in exchange for a bonus. Drivers working at least seven hours outside the 12-hour spread would still be paid for an eight-hour shift.

The proposed system would reduce the guaranteed daily hours from eight to six hours, Graham said.

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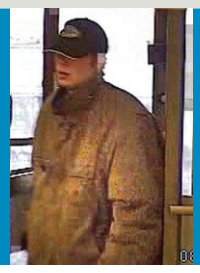
Mayors get together for musical cheer
The Old Grey Mayors will reunite for a performance of Christmas carols at Riverpark Place residence in Ottawa's west end today. Former mayors Jim Watson, Allan Higdon, Doug Thompson, Mary Pitt, Marianne Wilkinson, Claudette Cain and others hit the stage at 11 a.m. METRO OTTAWA

Local



Cops release pic of suspected robber

At 10:10 a.m. Monday, a lone male stole an undisclosed amount of cash from a Scotiabank on McCarthy Road. He fled the scene on foot. There were no injuries and no weapon was seen. The suspect is described as a white male, between 20 and 25 years old, about 5-foot-9 with brown hair, brown eyes and noticeably straight white teeth. He was cleancut and wearing a green hat with a brim and a dark green jacket with cargo pockets at the time of the incident. Anyone with information is asked to contact the robbery section at 613-236-1222, ext. 5116, or Crime Stoppers at 613-233-8477 (TIPS). METRO OTTAWA

White Christmas dreams set for reality

But snowy weather is adding more havoc on the roads during transit strike

TRACEY TONG
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With the latest dump of snow early yesterday morning and more to come later this week, it looks like Ottawa is guaranteed to get a white Christmas, Environment Canada said yesterday.

"We got eight centimetres in the Ottawa area," said Peter Kimbell, a warning preparedness meteorologist for Environment Canada working out of the nation's capital.

"And chances are very good that it will stay. We're going to see cold temperatures — a bit below normal temperatures — for the next couple of days.

"The odds of having a white Christmas in Ottawa are quite good," he added.

Although it's too early to say how much, storms forecasted for tomorrow and Sunday will bring at least five to 10 centimetres of snow into the area, Kimbell said. The south end of the city and the area of eastern Ontario towards Kingston will get more snow, he predicted.

"Chances are very good that (snow) will stay ... The odds of having a white Christmas in Ottawa are quite good."
Peter Kimbell, Environment Canada

Yesterday's snowfall added to the havoc on the streets of Ottawa on the eighth day of the OC Transpo strike.

"We had an extremely busy morning," said Ottawa paramedic spokesman J.P. Trottier.

"We were going from crash to crash," he added. "There were several rollovers."

He said there were collisions reported on Greenbank Road at Fallowfield Drive and Baseline Road, as well as Highway 174 in the east end.

"It gets to the point where there's too many to count," he said.

Fortunately, he said, there were only minor injuries because of the low speeds.

"People have to be careful when there's any kind of snow," said Kimbell, who worked from home yesterday.

"It's worth taking precautions this time of year."

metronews.ca

What's online today.

Video Boy who gave bone marrow to save his brother hailed as a hero at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video New spy drones arrive in Afghanistan to help keep soldiers safe at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Jim Flaherty vows to work with the provinces to revive the economy at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49: 11, 18, 22, 28, 30 & 49 Bonus 25
Ontario 49: 1, 4, 18, 39, 43 & 47 Bonus 41
Ontario Pick 3: 2 8 0; **Ontario Pick 4** : 1 4 8 1
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These results are not official.

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Strike **Posties protest**

TIM WIECLAWSKI/METRO OTTAWA

Canadian Union of Postal Workers national president Denis Lemelin speaks to union supporters at a rally in front of the Chateau Laurier where Canada Post Corp. president and CEO Moya Greene was purported to be eating lunch. The Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Union of Postal Communications Employees joined CUPW at the rally yesterday. About 2,100 Canada Post clerical, financial, engineering and administrative staff went on strike on Nov. 17 after collective bargaining broke down, primarily because of opposition to proposed changes to short-term disability and sick leave.

Rallies and petitions set up to protest OC Transpo strike

OUTCRY The first of a series of public anti-strike rallies is planned for noon today, and while organizers aren't picking sides, they admit most people are upset OC Transpo drivers, mechanics and dispatchers went on strike now.

If the 2,300 members of the ATU 279 had gone on strike during the summer, it's possible they could have earned more public sympathy, said Ryan Swan, who helped organize the OC Transpo counter-protest scheduled for noon at city hall.

"Putting this kind of pressure on the city at this time of year was a really inconsiderate thing to do," said Swan. "It's screwing up people's lives."

Another anti-strike rally is planned for noon Saturday at city hall, and there is also an online petition to have OC Transpo employees fired.

Dylan Clendining, who set up fireottawabusdrivers.com, said the petition is not personal, but rather an outlet for members of the public to vent their frustration.

Not everyone is angry with the drivers. Pro-union demonstrators are also expected to join ATU members on the picket lines this morning.

TIM WIECLAWSKI/METRO OTTAWA

News in brief

DONORS While the transit strike hasn't yet affected blood collection, Canadian Blood Services is looking to possibly get a shuttle service so donors don't miss their appointments. According to data from Canadian Blood Services, current forecasts suggest that between Dec. 1 and Jan. 2, hospitals will need more blood than current appointment bookings suggest will be collected.

TRACEY TONG/METRO OTTAWA

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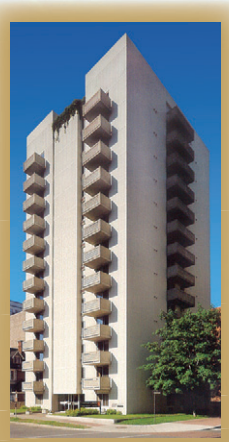

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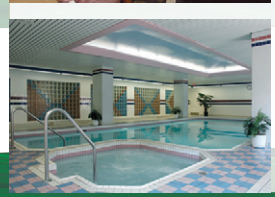

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Pawn-shop merchandise could be illegal, police warn
In light of a recent incident where a $100,000 bassoon was stolen from the National Arts Centre and was found for sale in a Montreal pawnshop through EBay, Ottawa police are reminding people to ensure that property purchased from pawn shops has not been acquired illegally. **METRO OTTAWA**

Strike may harm shelters' holiday dinners

TRACEY TONG
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With the economic downturn, the need for free community dinners is greater than ever to ensure all Ottawans have a happy holiday season.

But if the OC Transpo strike is still on come Sunday afternoon, the city's most needy may have no way to access the Ottawa Mission's annual community Christmas dinner, the shelter's executive director said yesterday.

"My concern is the bus strike," said Diane Morrison. "If (people) are out of walking distance, I don't know how they're going to get here. I hope they'll manage to get down here."

Morrison said the shelter was originally hoping for a turnout of about 2,500 people, but doesn't know what to expect.

"It's important that everyone can have Christmas dinner. The way things are, some people can't afford to do it."
Ric Watson

"The Salvation Army had their dinner last Saturday, and they said they were 15 per cent down from last year," she said.

Kitchen staff and volunteers have been working more than a week to prepare the Mission's dinner, which includes 2,500 pounds of oven-roasted turkey, 300 tourtieres, 450 pounds of mashed potatoes, 400 pounds of glazed baby carrots, 400 pounds of green beans and 250 lemon-meringue pies.

"It's important that everyone can have Christmas dinner," said Ric Watson, the shelter's manager of food services."The way things are, some people can't afford to do it. (Some) people can't make it from paycheck to paycheque."

Morrison said the shelter is "currently looking into alternative ways of getting people down" to the shelter if bus service remains suspended throughout the weekend.

The dinner, which will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday at 35 Waller St., isn't the only free community dinner held in Ottawa this season.

Peter Evanchuck and Helene Lacelle are hosting their first annual free community brunch at the Sandy Hill Community Centre from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

The dinner, which is open to all, features international food including hot and sour pork on rice, perogies, sausages, noodles and tourtiere.

"The need is definitely out there this year," said Evanchuck.

Hintonburg's Carleton Tavern is also hosting a free community dinner at the restaurant from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Christmas Day.

News in brief

COLLISION A 20-year-old Ottawa man faces several impaired-driving charges after a three-vehicle crash sent people to hospital with minor injuries Tuesday night.

The collision occurred just before 9 p.m. on Carling Avenue at Ritchie Street in the city's west end. While the accused's passengers suffered minor injuries, the occupants of the other two cars were not injured.

Police said yesterday the injured parties were treated and released from hospital.

Police charged the man with impaired driving, driving a motor vehicle with more than 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle. He appeared in court yesterday morning.

TRACEY TONG / METRO OTTAWA

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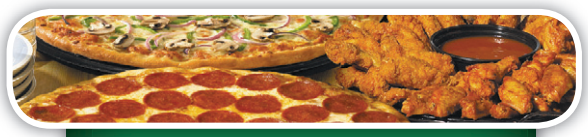

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Pacific ports, unions to resume labour talks

Talks aimed at averting a strike at some Pacific Coast ports are progressing slowly, a representative of the employers said yesterday. Foremen in Vancouver and Prince Rupert, B.C., will be in a legal strike position as of Jan. 2, but the union and employers are scheduled to meet with a mediator again tomorrow. **REUTERS**

Canada

Unusual ice led to collapse

An unusual buildup of ice likely caused the collapse of a gondola tower that stranded more than 50 skiers in mid-air at Whistler, B.C., officials said yesterday. A preliminary investigation discovered that water had leaked into the tower at the Whistler Blackcomb resort. The water then froze, creating a condition called "ice jacking," which caused the structure to fail on Tuesday. REUTERS

News in brief

EDMONTON A man out for a smoke got the shock of a lifetime when a naked woman fell from the sky yesterday morning. The 19-year-old woman fell from a third-floor balcony of an apartment located and landed at the feet of a man standing outside. Though she was, miraculously, uninjured, police believe she may have been the victim of a domestic dispute, and was possibly on drugs.

LEGAL BATTLE Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams told CBC yesterday that if AbitibiBowater wants to start a legal fight, it is welcome to try, but he insists his government has the legislative power to expropriate the company's assets in the province. Williams was responding to the company's threat to take legal action over the province's expropriation of the company's provincial assets.

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DAVID STOBBE/REUTERS

Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty talks with the media yesterday after an all-day meeting with the provincial and territorial finance ministers in Saskatoon, Sask.

Provincial, federal ministers agree on economic plan

Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and his provincial counterparts agreed yesterday on a joint pro-growth plan which includes accelerating spending on urban reconstruction, better support for workers and freeing up bank credit for Canadian businesses and consumers.

Flaherty said Ottawa must open its coffers to pump money into the economy to soften the impact of the recession, but said it is too early to say how big the planned stimulus package would be. Economic growth next year will decline by 0.4 per cent, he said.

Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, who sharply criticized Flaherty in the private meetings, welcomed the agreement in principle on federal-provincial action. But "we really didn't deal with what I would call the substantive, tough issues," he told the media.

The hard questions are what kind of economic stimulus is most effective, what kind of infrastructure investments are best and "how do you get the money into the ground" quickly, he said. Duncan noted that Ontario signed a major agreement on infrastructure spending with Ottawa in July "and not one dollar has flowed."

Flaherty said the ministers are aware of the need to move quickly with infrastructure projects. He said Ottawa and the provinces are going to put together a list of projects that "are ready to go across Canada" after the budget, "so that the stimulus will be effective." He said Ottawa's infrastructure spending next year will probably exceed the $6 billion already promised.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

$5B deficit

- Finance Minister Jim Flaherty used the meeting as an opportunity to admit for the first time that the economy would retract next year and that Ottawa would run a budget deficit in 2009 of at least $5 billion.

Ontario to get more seats in Parliament

POLITICS Prime Minister Stephen Harper is giving Ontario an early holiday gift — greater representation for the province in the House of Commons.

Under Harper's previous legislation, which died on the order paper before the Oct. 14 federal election, B.C. would have gained seven seats, Alberta five and Ontario 10 — less than half the 21 it's entitled to due to rising population numbers.

"I spoke to him about that and I think we've ... fixed it," Premier Dalton McGuinty blurted out to surprised reporters yesterday.

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Oscar-winning Crash's TV spinoff gets mixed reviews

Four years after polarizing Americans with its take on racial bigotry and stereotypes, Oscar-winning movie Crash is enjoying life as a TV series that has divided critics. Crash the TV series comes from Canadian Paul Haggis. The 13-episode series has been found by some critics to lack the intensity of the movie. REUTERS

World/Business

Cobblers claim credit for shoes

Shoemakers seeking publicity after Bush incident in Iraq

Across the Middle East, rival shoemakers have claimed it was they who created the footwear flung at U.S. President George W. Bush by an angry Iraqi and immortalized by TV cameras.

For many, reporter Muntazer al-Zaidi is a hero for the attack on Bush, and some of the glory seems to have rubbed off on the shoes that almost connected with the presidential head.

Suggestions have been made that they came from cobblers in China, Turkey or Lebanon.

But yesterday, Zaidi's brother dismissed such reports, saying they came from the Baghdad factory of Iraqi shoemaker Alaa Haddad, viewed as among the country's best.

Turkish newspaper Yeni Safak reported Turkish businessman Ramazan Baydan had made the shoes and carried a front-page picture of the design, alongside the headline Made in Turkey.

Baydan said he designed the style in 1999, and orders from Iraq had increased by 100 per cent since the Bush incident.

The Lebanese newspaper as-Safir bore a front-page photo showing Zaidi during a visit to Beirut in November with an accompanying headline: Did He Buy the Shoes in Beirut?

REUTERS

Hero's reward?

• An Egyptian man said yesterday he was offering his 20-year-old daughter in marriage to Iraqi journalist Muntazer al-Zaidi, who threw his shoes at U.S. President George W. Bush in Baghdad on Sunday. The man's daughter said she agreed with the proposal, declaring that it would "honour" her to marry Zaidi.

First U.S. patient undergoes face transplant

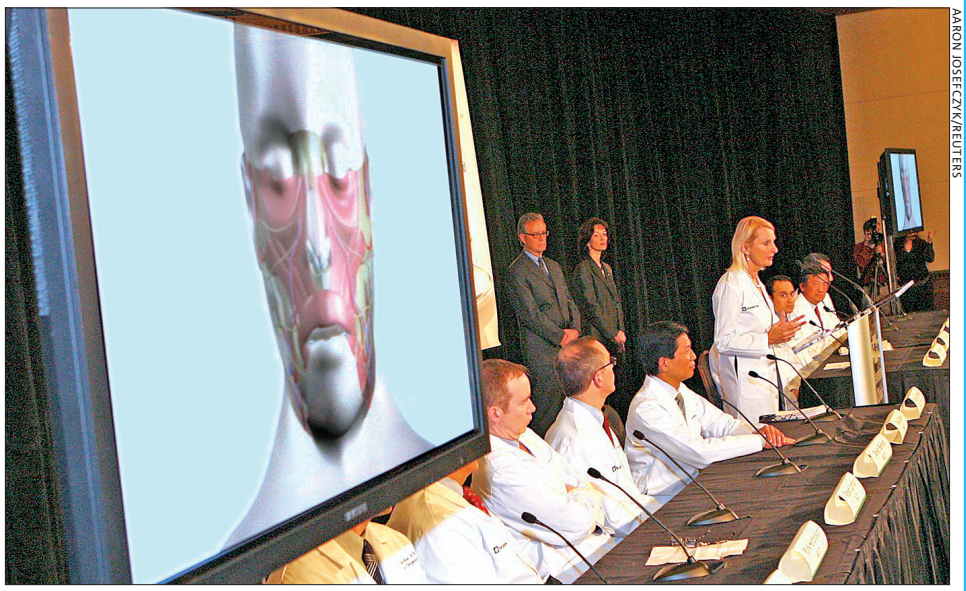
SCIENCE Surgeons have replaced 80 per cent of a woman's face, transplanting bone, teeth, muscle and nerve in the first such operation in the United States.

They said the woman suffered severe trauma that cost her an eye, much of her nose and her upper jaw and left her unable to breathe, smell, taste or smile properly.

Ohio's Cleveland Clinic, which oversaw the operation, gave no details about the woman, how she was injured, or who the donor was.

"Our hopes are ... that she will be able to smile again," said Francis Papay, the chair of dermatology and plastic surgery at the clinic.

Some controversy has surrounded the issue of face transplants, in part because face injuries are not seen as life-threatening. But in this case, the doctors said, the patient had virtually no life because of her injury.



AARON JOSEFCZYK/REUTERS

Maria Siemionow, standing at podium, talks about the surgeons team that performed the first U.S. near-total face transplant in the past two weeks in Cleveland, Ohio, yesterday.

"We know that there are so many patients there in their homes where they are hiding from society because ... they are afraid," said Dr. Maria Siemionow, director of plastic surgery research. "Our patient was called names and was humiliated."

REUTERS

Business

Internet Explorer flaw exposes 1.5M web users

More than 1.5 million computer users around the globe may have been exposed to harmful software or viruses because of a "critical" security flaw in Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer, the most widely used Web browser in the world.

The software giant yesterday took the unusual step of releasing an unscheduled update, or patch, to protect customers using all supported versions of the software.

"This is a severe vulnerability," said Ben Greenbaum, a senior research manager for Symantec Security Response, which sells anti-virus software.

He added that Symantec's research showed a "significant" increase in hacker attacks over the past several days that aimed to exploit the flaw — a trend that likely pressured Microsoft to put a rush on its update.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The security flaw

How malware works

• Unwitting Internet surfers can put their machines at risk by viewing a web page that has been loaded with malicious software, or malware. That includes sites that have been created to host the harmful software, or legitimate sites that have been compromised by hackers. The malware is then downloaded without the users' knowledge, making it possible for hackers to control the machines remotely and use them to send out spam or distribute more malware.

BCE suing would-be buyers

LEGAL Telecom giant BCE Inc has sued its would-be buyers in a failed $34.8 billion takeover agreement over the collapsed deal's $1.2 billion break-up fee.

According to a court document filed in the province of Quebec and posted on BCE's website, the company says it's entitled to the money from the buyers — a group of private-equity firms led by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. The buyers have said neither side is owed a break fee as a re-sult of the deal's collapse.

In its lawsuit, BCE asks the Superior Court that Teachers pay about $704 million of the total.

REUTERS

In brief

MARKETS The Toronto Stock Exchange and the small-cap TSX Venture Exchange are expected to reopen today after a system fault linked to data feeds shut down both markets for the whole session yesterday. It's the longest forced outage since 1997.

OIL Canadian oil firms such as Connacher Oil and Gas Ltd. are beginning to cut back on production as oil prices continue to slide. On Monday, Connacher said it would cut production to 5,000 barrels per day from 9,000. REUTERS

ECONOMY Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney said it is "entirely premature" to talk about implementing U.S.-style, unorthodox policy tools the Federal Reserve is wielding after the U.S. central bank cut its rate to virtually zero.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

CORRUPTION Illinois' Supreme Court yesterday denied a request that Gov. Rod Blagojevich be temporarily removed from office amid charges he tried to sell president-elect Barack Obama's old Senate seat. REUTERS

Relatives of crash victims arrive in Israel

FATALITIES Relatives of Russian tourists injured in a bus crash arrived in Israel yesterday as officials prepared to fly the bodies of the 24 who died back to St. Petersburg.

The 49 Russians, part of a group of tour operators, had been in Israel only a few hours on Tuesday for a training trip when their bus travelling from Ovda airport veered off a desert road near the Red Sea resort city of Eilat and plunged down a ravine.

Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz said the crash occurred as the driver, who was injured but was being questioned by police, tried to overtake another bus.

REUTERS

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Comment & Views

Comment

Case of musical chairs

Canada now a shadow of its former self on world stage

Home&Abroad

Andrew Cohen

Canada & world insight

From Lawrence Cannon comes word that Canada is "actively campaigning" for a seat on the United Nations Security Council beginning in 2011.

Cannon made the announcement — if that is what it was — at a diplomatic forum in Quebec City yesterday. Reuters treated it as news. For Canadians who fear their country has gone missing in the world, maybe it is.

News? It's news that we are "pursuing" a seat that we have held, once a decade, since the founding of the United Nations in 1945? It's news that we are mounting a campaign to assume our traditional role as one of the 10 rotating non-permanent members of the council?

If that's news, it's because Canada's stature has fallen so far that last spring Ottawa had considered *not* running for a seat traditionally considered ours. If we were not going to win it, the government felt, why risk the embarrassment of losing?

We are now a country that's a shadow of its former self in the world, which must labour mightily to win a seat on the Security Council. The fear in Ottawa is that Canada won't have the votes in the General Assembly when the election is held in 2010.

This suggests a country without commitment, which simply isn't serious about the world anymore.

Much has to do with a loss of support in Africa, where we no longer have the presence in development assistance that we did. Indeed, some say that we have abandoned Africa.

This time, the two open seats may likely to go Portugal or Germany, which has been mounting a well-organized campaign.

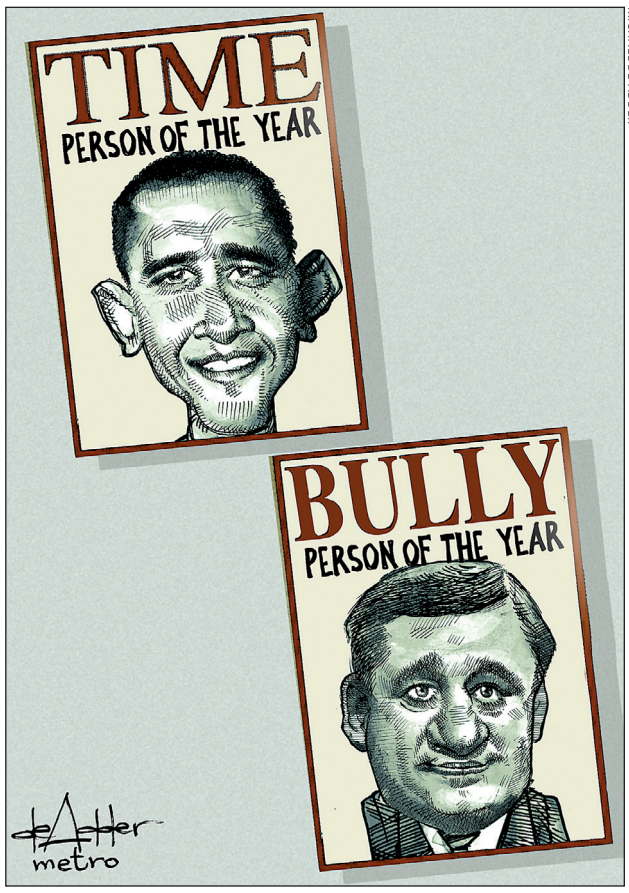
Incidentally, Cannon is the minister of foreign affairs. You can be forgiven if you don't know this because it's unlikely the world does, as well.

This isn't his fault; Cannon is intelligent, thoughtful and articulate in both official languages. The problem is Cannon is Canada's fourth foreign minister since the Conservatives took office in February 2006. He has been preceded by Peter MacKay, Maxime Bernier and David Emerson.

Changing ministers like changing shirts isn't new; since Lester Pearson left the position in 1957, Canada has had a different foreign minister about every two years. The terms are getting shorter.

This suggests a country without commitment, which simply isn't serious about the world anymore. And that's why we are now chasing a seat on the Security Council, and why that is news in Canada.

Andrew Cohen teaches journalism at Carleton University. He is the author of Extraordinary Canadians: Lester B. Pearson.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Getting better child care — it's the policy, stupid

Martha Friendly

A new study of early childhood education and care in 25 countries ranked Canada in last place, tied with Ireland, behind the U.S., Australia and Mexico.

While other evidence has long shown Canada to be a laggard on child care, UNICEF's study — the first to use measurable outcomes — has motivated Canadians to ask, "Why are we doing so poorly?" The study offers a plain answer: "It's the policy, stupid," paraphrasing former U.S. president Bill Clinton's campaign slogan.

Two key developments drove the study. First, most children in affluent countries now have mothers working outside the home; 75 per cent of mothers of three- to five-year-olds are in the labour force in Canada.

Second, abundant research shows that young children — especially older preschoolers and more vulnerable children — benefit from good quality early childhood education (ECEC).

It's no wonder that UNICEF has called on Canada for a public policy response.

UNICEF observes that these developments converge: Access to good quality not only enhances a child's well-being and development with long-term social and economic returns, but is also a key strategy for responding to immediate economic challenges such as parents' access to employment, reduction of dependence on social programs, strengthening local economies and job creation.

The study bases its rankings on 10 benchmarks that build upon Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that states, "The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

The rankings tell the public policy story. None of the six poorest ranking countries has a national plan for ECEC. The six top countries met most of the benchmarks, including public financing of at least one per cent of GDP while the poorest ranked countries met very few. The benchmark ratings show that public policy "in the best interests of children" means that a national policy and adequate financing are linked to good access to quality ECEC programs and go hand-in-hand with better parental leave, lower child poverty rates and better health indicators for young children.

It's no wonder that UNICEF has called on Canada for a public policy response — "the federal government must take the lead … with solutions presented to the public by July 2009." A good beginning to this would be funds for child care in the January federal budget followed by development of a robust ECEC policy framework that meets the needs of families and children.

Canada should do no less.

Martha Friendly is the executive director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Letters

Put an end to metered parking during transit strike

I would like to personally thank the City of Ottawa for the generous luxury of parking in a $110 parking spot six blocks from work.

I consider myself to be so blessed as to have to pay the City of Ottawa not one, but two parking fines on the same day.

What do you think the average worker is going to do? Run six blocks every hour and pop a coin in the meter?

As far as I'm concerned, the City of Ottawa has done absolutely nothing to try to accommodate the approximately 300,000 taxpaying, working citizens who have been inconvenienced by this OC Transpo strike.

I consider it to be an outrage that anybody should have to pay to park in a valid parking spot during this strike.

Having metered parking during this strike is nothing short of a cash grab on decent citizens. All of this is happening during a time when we are facing difficult economic times and when most working class people's budgets are extended to their limit getting ready for Christmas.

Put an end to metered parking until this strike is over.

My family sincerely thanks you for the money you have taken away from our Christmas budget!

EDWARD SABOURIN, OTTAWA

What happens to the money paid in advance for passes?

I am one of many who has been affected by the current OC Transpo strike. I am using a monthly bus pass and have been doing this for many years.

Currently, we walk, ride a bike and get help from friends or take a taxi depending on the situation. Are we getting a credit for the money paid in advance for the bus passes that we are unable to use?

Nobody has addressed this issue so far.

We paid for the passes in good faith and were not told not to purchase the bus pass due to a potential strike.

ARJUNA SUBASINGHE, NEPEAN

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: ottawaletters@metronews.ca
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Davenport pregnant, to skip Aussie open

American tennis star Lindsay Davenport is withdrawing from the Australian Open because she is pregnant with her second child. The former No. 1-ranked woman gave birth to a son, Jagger, in June 2007. Davenport hasn't played since the U.S. Open in August of this year. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

"There's just so many bloggers; everybody's got an opinion. Sometimes that starts forming the opinion of people in front offices, too, and owner."

Minnesota Timberwolves coach Kevin McHale, left, to the St. Paul Pioneer-Press on the stresses of coaching in the NBA today. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

NBA RESULT

Mavericks 96 **Raptors** 86

VS

Dirk Nowitzki scored 27 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and doled out four assists to lead the Dallas Mavericks in a 96-86 victory over the Toronto Raptors last night.

Jermaine O'Neal poured in a team-high 19 points for the Raptors, who have lost three straight and eight of 10. Boos cascaded down from Toronto fans as the Raptors blew what was at one point a 13-point lead. METRO NEWS SERVICES

2008: The Sens' annus horriblis

TheHockeyNews

Suffice it to say, there probably isn't a hockey team in the world that's as eager to close the book on 2008 more than your Ottawa Senators.

And there probably isn't a team in the NHL that needs to take a more serious look at itself and do something to change a baffling pattern of underachievement.

To be blunt, it has been an annus horriblis for the Senators. Talk about The Year of Playing Lousily.

With a 4-1 loss to the lowly Atlanta Thrashers — can they be considered lowly if they're only one place and three points behind? — Tuesday night, the Senators guaranteed they will have a sub-.500 record for the calendar year of 2008.

Even if they were to run the table for their final six games of the year, they would still find themselves one game under .500 in a league where .500 has become a joke because of the points teams get for losing in overtime and the shootout.

The loss to Atlanta gave the Senators a 28-35-10 regular-season record for 2008, one that falls to 28-39-10 mark if you include the first-round playoff sweep at the hands of the Pittsburgh Penguins.

So, to review, the Senators have won just 28 of a possible 77 games in 2008, a year that started with so much promise and promises to end with so much despair. So what are the Senators to do? Are they at the point where they blow up this team and start anew? Do they become sellers as the trade deadline approaches and hope to get a boatload of young players and prospects/draft picks in exchange for Jason Spezza?

Or do they continue to show faith in this group of players and management team, confident that this group is far better than its record indicates and hopeful it has what it takes to turn the situation around?

Well, doing the last one hasn't exactly worked wonders for the Senators in 2008.

And there's very little evidence based on the past 12 months to suggest the team is miraculously going to morph into a redux of the 2007 team that went to the Stanley Cup final.

That leaves the major-change route. It remains to be seen whether the Senators will employ it, but it should make for an interesting 2009.

Enjoy the holidays.

The Hockey News
thn.com

No way around it: Avery situation is completely out of whack

This is how a neophyte could sum up the Sean Avery situation:

In the NHL, saying something stupid to a media scrum will get you suspended six games and lead your team to essentially release you. But if you hit somebody headfirst into the boards from behind (as Tom Kostopoulos did to Mike Van Ryn, giving Van Ryn a concussion) you get exactly half that suspension and not cut.

Obviously, it's a little deeper than that. It's clear Avery's teammates didn't want him back, and that was ultimately the reason for his dismissal.

That's fine.

But on another level, the summary is still 100 per cent correct. The hypocrisy of the NHL is one of the many reasons the sport has at times trailed poker and women's college softball in U.S. TV ratings. I'm not calling out Kostopoulos, either — his hit wasn't deliberate, but it was arguably careless and did cause a serious injury. Meanwhile, nothing Avery has done — seeing as his persona non grata status is also the result of his laundry list of antics — ever threatened brain damage on another human being.

Let me be clear that I'm not defending what Avery said. At best, it was juvenile, at worst, misogynistic. When he called out the league for not having stars marketable in the U.S. last summer, of course he was smug and condescending. But he had a point.

It's no secret that the culture of hockey is vastly different from that of any other sport.

That culture led Brendan Shanahan to once say there could never be a Dennis Rodman in the NHL. The Worm was probably an extreme example, but Shanahan was absolutely right.

And that's part of the reason why the NHL will continue to toil in the U.S. marketplace during a recession with a national TV deal that doesn't even guarantee it money. To suspend a player and then have the team get rid of him — for saying something that in any other sport would likely result in a fine and nothing else — may look wonderfully moralistic, but for an entertainment business to play the high horse in a society where prime-time TV features everything from horny teenagers on the upper east side of Manhattan to women opening the bidding on their sexual orientation, it doesn't wash.

Especially when you are running the only team sports league on the planet where fist-fighting is an encouraged part of the game.

When Ron Artest went into the stands in Detroit four years ago and ignited the brilliantly christened Malice at the Palace, it was widely viewed as the darkest moment in NBA history.

Yet '70s-era video of Mike Milbury going into the stands and beating a fan with his own shoe is today considered hysterical.

The differences in reaction raise some sociological issues I don't have 60 pages to get into, but one aspect of it is clear: The NHL doesn't have its priorities straight.

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Tech sector job losses
Ottawa's tech sector has lost nearly 19,000 jobs in 2008. And 2009 looks like conditions will continue to be difficult. **SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA.**

Tech Now

Tech investments

Venture capitalists, who have seeded new ideas for everything from Google to smart electric meters, expect increased investment in clean technology despite the recession, a survey by the National Venture Capital Association has found.

REUTERS

Christmas advice and a tech-show preview

One week from today will be Christmas Day. A lot of presents will have arrived containing some technology, whether its toys for young children or toys for the bigger kids who like things like big-screen TVs and smart phones.

Still wondering what to get? According to gift comments on blogs monitored by Nielsen Online, 52 per cent of bloggers are talking about TVs, almost one-quarter mention DVD players, toys, laptops and GPS, which is mentioned by only by four per cent of blogs.

The Consumer Electronics Association, the people who host the world's biggest consumer electronics show (CES), they say growth of sales will be in video gaming (up six per cent), digital cameras (up seven per cent) and GPS (up 30 per cent).

Now as for CES, once again it is in Las Vegas and runs Jan. 8 to 11. Nearly 3,000 exhibitors and 130,000 visitors are expected from around the world.

Everything you can imagine is on display, but areas expected to be big include entertainment for inside the car. Home theatre/audio/video continue as a perennial favourite and this year wireless technology for the home will be a big attraction; in fact, wireless in general will get a lot of attention. Several cell phone companies will be trotting out the latest phones … though several of them have already been released in Europe and Asia.

In addition to showing off tech products, the show features a global collection of experts who will lay out their vision of the industry in 2009. The industry is still predicting a global sales figure in 2008 of $700 billion … that would be a growth rate of 16 per cent. The world's economic slowdown may well put a dent in that optimism.

There is also a special focus on baby boomers and technology to help them enjoy their greying years, and a full day will be devoted to children and technology, both the good and the bad influences of tech, and then a day of discussions on how technology can be a driver to boost developing economies.

I'll have more on CES in columns in the New Year. My next column will be on Jan. 8, 2009. All the best of the Christmas season to you and yours and a very Happy New Year!

RATHER THAN A WEBSITE RECOMMENDATION THIS WEEK … an invitation to send me an e-mail suggesting topics you would like to see in this column. Reach me at technow@ctv.ca.

This Sunday one of the stories on TECH NOW will be advice on buying a computer.

Be sure to watch Tech Now this Sunday as part of the CTV NEWS at 6 p.m.

Wondering what to presents to give for Christmas? TVs and DVD players are what bloggers are talking about at this time of year.

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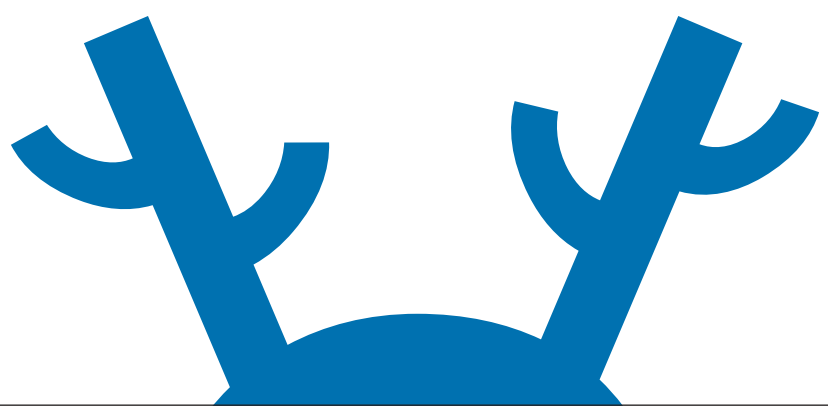

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Metro Homes

Bottled up
Evian's holiday pret-a-porter bottles by Christian Lacroix, far left, and Jean Paul Gaultier can double as offbeat and budget-friendly vases. Just add white branches, holly or a cut amaryllis.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Eleventh-hour holiday decorating

There's still time before your in-laws arrive — but not much

HomeScape

Stuck for a holiday-decor theme? Tried-and-true options include high-shine and natural looks — and you can always resort to some combination of red, green gold and silver.

If you're set on trying out a more adventurous theme, go for it — just try to choose colours that harmonize with your home decor.

If you're one of those people who honestly do intend to put up Christmas decorations but haven't yet gotten around to it, don't worry. There really is time before your in-laws come knocking at the door ... but not much.

What you need is a plan to minimize work and maximize your holiday decor impact. Luckily, some of us have been there, and are willing to share the art of laying on the Christmas cheer pretty close to the deadline.

Rule number one is to scale down — concentrate on doing more with less. Try to avoid plastering the house with every last piece of Christmas finery you've acquired over the last decade. For a classy look, less is more. Be selective.

Try to avoid plastering the house with every last piece of Christmas finery you've acquired over the last decade.

It can be handy to go with a theme in order to choose which decorations you need to use, and which ones you need to keep stored away.

You may decide to go with ornaments of a certain colour, for example. If you do, pick colours that harmonize with your home decor.

But you're at a loss about how to coordinate holiday decor with your purple walls, you can always go for some combination of red, green, gold and silver, which always works well at Christmas.

If you're willing to be adventurous, you could go with a theme, such as ornaments from a certain time, like '70s disco, or an old-fashioned Victorian-looking Christmas, or a "bling" Christmas using baubles and enormous rings.

Something unique can be refreshingly original, but the old standards can be quite lovely too. As always, traditional colours always look great with evergreen boughs, pinecones, grasses, branches and berries. Although the natural look may not be new and exciting, it looks reliably classy.

When it comes to choosing areas of the house to decorate, stick to a few highly visible areas. A Christmas tree is obligatory in most houses. Other visible areas include the front door or windows, a fireplace mantel and a staircase railing.

Unless your children or family members are sticklers for the traditional tree, you do not necessarily have to cut one and drag it home. To keep things easier, go for a bunch of large evergreen boughs arranged into a large vase, or a small pine in a pot which you can transplant in your garden or use as a house plant afterwards.

Keep with the Christmas decor theme, if you used one. To decorate quickly, use larger ornaments, or tie eye-catching ribbons to the branches.

You can broadcast your Christmas cheer to neighbours by putting up the ubiquitous wreath on the front door or window, which you can buy at your local grocery store and decorate with ornaments, dried fruits or ribbons.

For staircases and mantels above fireplaces, think in term of garlands or a regularly spaces series of wreaths. Swags of fabric can also work nicely, draped and arranged prettily, and interspersed with shiny ornamentation or wrapped around sparkly LED lights that remain cool when turned on.

Sylvia Putz is a journalist with an interest in decor and design. She's written for the TV show Arresting Design; sputz@arrestingdesign.com.

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Secret weapons

Here are a few other tricks for late decorators:

- Tie ribbon on candlesticks, plants, the backs of chairs, doorknobs or anything at all to make the house look holiday-like.
- Use shiny baubles, shiny metals and crystal pieces that reflect or let the lights sparkle through.
- Lots of candles and a lit fireplace. At dinner or family relaxation time, light candles. They reflect off all the shiny baubles and reflective pieces and look wonderfully Christmas-y. (Remember to blow them out when you leave the room.)
- Last but not least, start decorating on Dec. 1 next year.

SYLVIA PUTZ/ FOR METRO CANADA

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Saturn Aura
2007 North American Car of the Year
(Hybrid shown)

Saturn Vue
2008 AJAC Award – Best New SUV/CUV
$35,000–$60,000
(Hybrid shown)

Pontiac Vibe
2009 AJAC Award – Best new small car over $18,000

Chevrolet Malibu
2008 North American Car of the Year
(Hybrid shown)

*Awarded by North American International Auto shows. 1. Chevrolet Tahoe Hybrid named 2008 Green Car of the Year by Green Car Journal editors. **2008 Best New Small Car awarded to Saturn Astra. 2009 Best New Small Car over $18,000 awarded to Pontiac Vibe. †Based on GM Testing in accordance with approved Transport Canada Test methods. Your actual fuel consumption may vary.

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Holiday Shopping Guide V

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Go for plush

#1 For the love of pets

Visit: tinipuppini.com
"Toffee" Tini Puppini doll, $34.99, by Spin Master. At Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, more.

#2 Hot holiday toys for him

Visit: bakugan.com
Bakugan Battle Brawlers, $5.49-$24.99. At Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, and more.

#3 Jingle bell rock 'n' roll

Visit: cbc.ca/kids
Mamma Yamma and Friends CD, $19.99 at chapters-indigo.ca.

#4 Fun and educational

Visit: beezibeez.com
This spelling game, $29.99, is available at barnesandnoble.com.

#5 Help them get active

Visit: m2universe.com
Kids can play Me2, $36.95, once they earn points through physical activity.

#6 Rockin' and rollin'

Visit: winners.ca
This plush rocking giraffe, $59.99, is available at Winners stores across Canada.

#7 Monkeying around

Phone: 1-888-633-5833
Visit: GrassrootsStore.com
Organic cotton-stuffed monkeys, $29.99.

#8 Make music

Visit: toyexpress.ca
Amazing Animals Spinnin' Around Musical Zoo by Fisher-Price, $60.

#9 For a good cause

Visit: ikea.ca
Soft toys, from $2.99-$14.99 ($1.58 goes to Unicef and Save the Children).

#10 Artistic expression

Visit: stampinup.com
Stampin' Kids Tattoo Kits, $16.50 each. Includes six individual designs.

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Sugar Lychee Sugar Affair, $75, by Fresh. Available at Sephora, 1-877-737-4672. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gifts for every techie

RICK McGINNIS
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

CELLPHONES:
Apple iPhone 3G ($199 with a three-year contract)

LG Vu ($79.99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Blackberry Bold ($299 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Samsung Jack Merlot ($24.99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Nokia E71 ($99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Motorola Rokr ($49 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Nokia 5310 XpressMusic ($19.99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

There's an almost endless range of cellphones on the market these days, and an equally endless number of things you can do with your phone, depending on how much you're willing to spend on service plans. One thing's for sure, though: it's almost impossible to find one that won't take pictures or play music.

At the top of everyone's wish list is the **iPhone** — the most addictive phone ever to hit the market, thanks to its wildly responsive touch screen and the wild selection of software available through iTunes' app store.

Never mind that if you use the phone as much as it wants you to, you have to recharge the thing every night – it's a computer even more than a cellphone.

LG's Vu is a sort of iPhone lite — a similarly sleek touch screen phone with an icon-based interface.

An especially nice touch is the shutter for the camera — placed on the side, roughly where you'd expect to find it on a real camera.

The **Blackberry Bold** is among the widest on the market, a boon for text and e-mail fiends with big thumbs.

Like the iPhone, the Bold has a full range of features, but it's all work, and little play — the way it requires that you go two clicks into the menu to turn on the keypad lock is an example of the rigorous relationship Blackberry users have with their phones.

The **Samsung Jack** is another handful of a phone, running Windows Mobile with a full QWERTY keyboard.

Mobile isn't a supremely elegant operating system, but it has the advantage of working well with your computer, and the comfort level of putting everything in the same place even when you change phones.

Nokia's slick, solid **E71** is the narrowest of the trio, and might prove a bit awkward for bulky digits.

It also uses Nokia's own OS, which takes some time to get comfy with.

The **Motorola Rokr** is a pretty phone, and impressively built, with a nice haptic touch interface – essential for a sleek candybar phone with no buttons.

The software and the small screen make it the least user-friendly of the bunch, however.

But rumour has it the company is actively working to overcome this failing.

Finally, **Nokia's 5310** is a small but handy phone if you eschew text and e-mail but want to leave your mp3 player at home.

You're going to need a 4GB MicroSD card to make that work, although the phone's nominal cost makes that more than affordable.

MINI COMPUTERS:
Toshiba Portege R600 ($3,299)

HP Mini 1000 ($399)

Dell Mini 9 ($349)

Toshiba Netbook NB100 ($479)

The day of the monster laptop is ending, with the larger members of the species taking up permanent residence in homes as "desktop replacements," while lighter, nimbler runabout models are taking advantage of the era of USB keys and net storage and losing their disc drives.

On the high end is **Toshiba's R600**, a sort of AirBook for the PC world. A fully featured Vista machine, it slims down both weight and battery consumption thanks to a 128GB solid state hard drive, but still manages to include a DVD disc drive. There's an eSATA port and two USB slots for outboard memory storage, and a fingerprint reader for paranoid types.

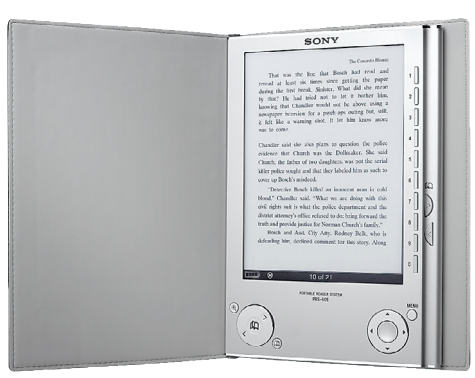
Dell's Mini 9 is the chunkiest of the mini notebooks at 2.28 pounds, and runs XP on an Intel Atom chip on a 16GB solid state drive, though an Ubuntu Linux version is available with a 32GB SSD. It has an 8.9-inch widescreen LED screen, and the keyboard has shifted some peripheral key placement around to fit its tight dimensions (just 9.13 inches).

HP's Mini 1000 is a bit wider than the Mini 9, and the keyboard is a bit more comfortable to use. It's just 2.25 pounds and runs XP on an Atom chip, with a 10.2-inch LED display. It has an SD/MMC card slot like the Dell and a range of hard drive options, from SSD to a 60GB PATA drive. HP is also designing the Mini 1000 with Wireless-G network options to make it the most truly mobile of the small notebooks. It comes with a full suite of MS Office, unlike other minis, which will ship with MS Works (like the Dell above) or Open Office.

Finally, there's **Toshiba's chunky NB100**, the tiniest of the lot, though not the lightest thanks to the 120GB hard drive. With an 8.9-inch screen and an Atom chip running XP Home, it still includes a full version of Office. The keyboard is tiny, and the trackpad tinier, and though the latter didn't prove too much of a problem, typing proved a truly cramped affair — at one point I actually wanted to pick the thing up and use my thumbs like I was texting.

OTHER STUFF:
Sony Reader PRS-505 ($299)

Sony Reader PRS-700 ($399)



The paperless library might be further in the future than the paperless office, even, but the day will come when most of us do our reading on sheets of e-ink rather than pulped trees, and Sony has been in on the revolution from nearly the beginning — even before Amazon's much-hyped Kindle.

The two current models of **Sony's Reader** are actually very different; the PRS-505 is slightly more low-tech, with page turns and menu accessible through small but discrete buttons, while the PRS-700 has a slicker touchscreen interface with page turns made by a flick of the finger. Reading an e-book requires an adjustment of mere minutes, and it was easy to forget that you were reading a screen instead of a page.

The PRS-700 includes a ring of LEDs bordering the screen for reading in low light situations, which will drain the battery more rapidly, though insomniac frequent fliers might appreciate the option. Both models will accept a variety of document types, including PDFs and Word files, though it's happiest with e-books bought from Sony's store, which is impressive enough for readers who shop from mainstream book shops.

Belkin Conserve surge protector ($49.99)

For the energy-conscious environmentalist — or merely the stingy — **Belkin's Conserve surge protector** lets you split your computer or home electronics gear into two groups: Stuff that has to be on 24/7, and the peripherals that draw phantom power even when they're supposed to be off. With a flick of the remote — designed like an oversized light switch — you can cut the power off to the peripherals and start whittling down your power bills.

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Holiday Shopping Guide V

Tool time

#1 Get Smart

Visit: blackanddecker.com
This Smart Select Jigsaw, $44.99, features a range of settings.

#2 Lightweight tool kit

Visit: homedepot.ca
Ryobi 4-Piece Lithium-ion Power Tool Kit, $169. Includes Hybrid Saw.

#3 Help him tune in

Visit: dewalt.com
DeWalt Cordless Job Site Radio, $198. At Home Depot, home-based retailers.

#4 Hammer time

Phone: 1-800-567-7705
Visit: bostitch.com
Bostitch Graphite Mallet, $55.99.

#5 Set 'em straight

Visit: utrdecorating.com
Hang & Level, $19.99. Available at home-based retailers across Canada.

CDWAREHOUSE.CA

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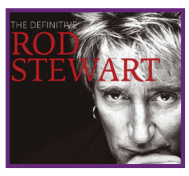

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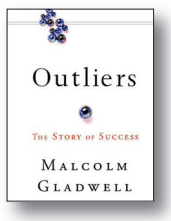
BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

This holiday season, travel to northern Ontario, India, into history and through the minds of the world's greatest achievers by stuffing one of these four books in the stocking of the book lover in your life.

Outliers: The Story of Success

Author: Malcolm Gladwell
Publisher: H.B Fenn & Company Ltd.
Price: $30.99 (hardcover)

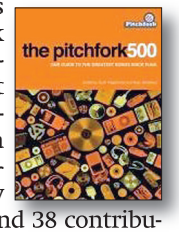
THE CANADIAN-RAISED author of The Tipping Point and Blink and staffer at The New Yorker examines the grounds for greatness in Outliers: The Story of Success. Gladwell examines why certain people are so much more successful than the social norm. While considering factors like culture, birth year, geographic origin and social status, Gladwell identifies real examples to unlock the secrets to success, including what Mozart, The Beatles and Bill Gates share that made them successful.



The Pitchfork 500

Editors: Scott Plagenhoef and Ryan Schreiber
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Canada
Price: $18.99 (paperback)

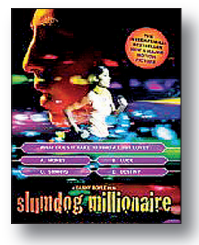
FROM DAVID BOWIE'S post-Ziggy tune Heroes, through Björk's Homogenic homage to Iceland, Jóga, The Pitchfork 500 picks the top songs "from punk to the present," perfect for the music snob in your life. Assembled by six editors and 38 contributors, and divided by year, this guide provides the genre-spanning back-stories to some of music's greatest songs and artists — interspersed with niche genre capsules like Grindcore: Ten Skatepunk Greats.



Slumdog Millionaire

Author: Vikas Swarup
Publisher: Harper Perennial
Price: $17.95 (paperback)

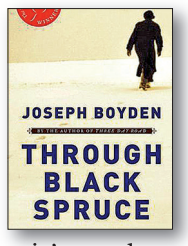
WHEN AN UNLIKELY, uneducated young man from the slums of Mumbai walks away with the top prize on ante-upped game show Who Will Win a Billion?, there's certain suspicion his talent for trivia must be the result of cheating. But 18-year-old waiter Ram Mohammad Thomas insists he just knew the answers. In the book, Thomas animatedly relives his past to convince a lawyer just how a teen who never read a newspaper went from slumdog to stinking rich.



Through Black Spruce

Author: Joseph Boyden
Publisher: Viking Canada
Price: $34 (hardcover)

MEET WILL BIRD: He's the Cree native bush pilot in a coma after drunkenly crashing his plane. Meet Annie Bird: She's Will's niece who is consumed by locating her supermodel sister. While Will's experiences reflect a traditional Aboriginal way of life, Annie's speak to the modern state of native Canada. Like their generations, Annie and Will's stories seem a world apart, but Boyden explores the similarities in each character's quest to find their own identity is.



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Holiday Shopping Guide V

Furry friends

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#2 Pamper your pooch

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#3 Help her get cosy

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#4 Make him run for it

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#5 For the sports fan

Visit: walmart.ca
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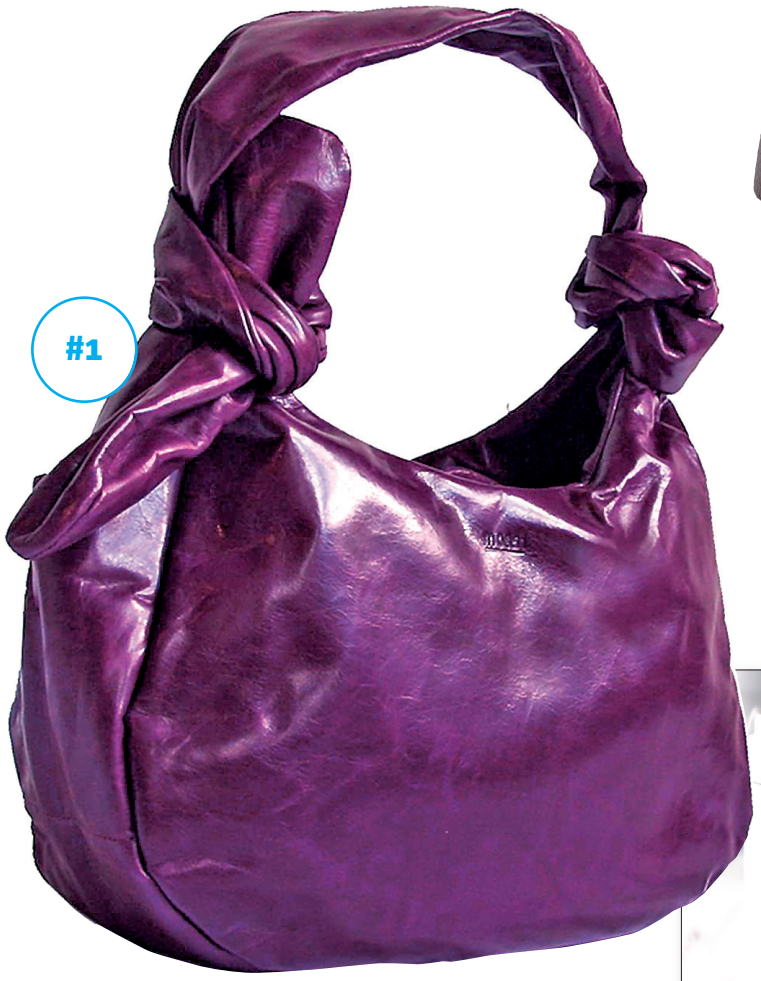
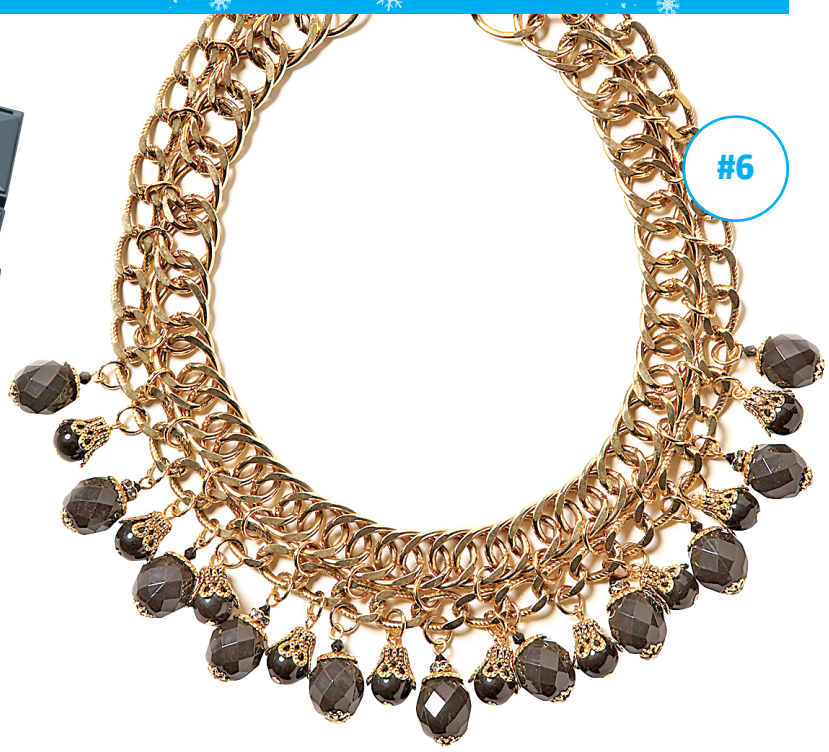
Holiday Shopping Guide V

Tinseltown treats





#1 Tied up in knots

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Twin pocket knot bag in aubergine, $400. Available at m0851's online store.

#2 Goody for her

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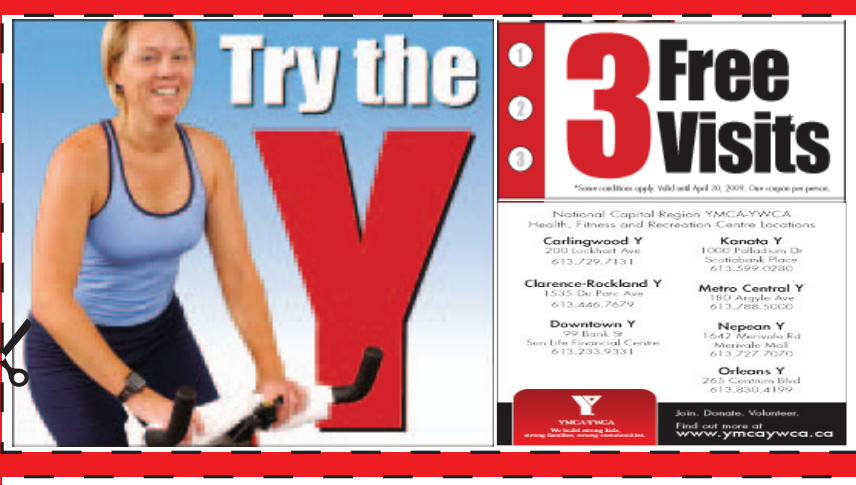

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Is staying in the new dining out?
According to the latest Eating Patterns In Canada report from The NPD Group, a full 88 per cent of respondents revealed their intentions to decrease the amount of time spent dining out in restaurants, choosing the comforts of home instead. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Food

"Just 5 Things: Easy Gourmet Cooking with Just a Handful of Ingredients is true to its word — all recipes contain only five ingredients."

Metro News Services

In colour
The Reader's Digest book, by Rachel Lane, contains more than 330 recipes, all illustrated with full-colour photographs.

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Try these season's eatings

À la carte

Barb Holland
Metro Food Writer

Sticky Toffee Pudding is a classic dessert of British origins. It is a winter dessert when warm and comforting — it really hits the spot. There are just about as many recipes for sticky toffee pudding (also referred to as sticky date pudding) as people who make them. Hope you enjoy this one. Wishing you delicious season's eatings!

Sticky Toffee Puddings

The puddings and the sauce can be made a day ahead, just cool, cover and refrigerate separately. The easiest way to reheat is briefly in the microwave —individually about 20 to 30 seconds until warm not hot. Don't overheat or they will go rubbery. Reheat sauce in microwave until warm. Look for honey dates in the produce section rather than the firm, pressed dated in the baking section. Makes 8 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1-1/2 cups (375 mL) pitted dates (about 8 oz/250 g), chopped
- 1 tsp (5 mL) baking soda
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) boiling water
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla
- 1-1/4 cups (300 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) baking powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) butter, softened
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) dark brown sugar
- 2 eggs

Toffee Sauce:

- 3/4 cup (175 mL) dark brown sugar
- 4 tsp (20 mL) cornstarch
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) butter
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla

METHOD:

Place dates and baking soda in a heatproof bowl. Pour boiling water over, stir and submerge dates in water; let stand 10 minutes until dates are well-softened. Mash with a fork. Stir in vanilla.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Butter 8 ramekin or custard cups. Whisk together flour, baking powder and salt, set aside.

In a bowl, beat butter and brown sugar together until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Fold in flour mixture then date mixture until evenly mixed (don't overmix). Divide batter between cups, filling about 3/4's full.

There are just about as many recipes for sticky toffee pudding as people who make them.

Place ramekins on a baking sheet and bake until puddings spring back when lightly touched or toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Transfer ramekins to wire rack to cool 10 minutes. Run a knife around edges to loosen.

While puddings are baking, make sauce. In a 4 cup (1 L) glass measure or bowl, whisk sugar and cornstarch together. Whisk in milk until smooth. Microwave, uncovered at High for 2 to 3 minutes or until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Whisk a few times during cooking. Stir in butter until melted, then vanilla. Makes about 1-1/4 cups (300 mL).

To serve, turn warm puddings out onto individual plates and serve with warm Toffee Sauce.

Tips:

- Baking soda added to warm water for soaking the dates softens and tenderizes the rather leathery skin of dried dates.
- Another way to reheat puddings: Invert all the puddings into a baking dish. Poke holes in puddings with a toothpick or thin skewer. Pour half the sauce over the puddings and heat in a 300°F (150°C) oven until warm, about 10 minutes. Poking holes allows the sauce to soak into the cakes rather than just sit on top. Serve with remaining warm sauce (you might want to make a double batch of sauce!).

When the days are short and the long, cold nights descend early, the Festival of Chanukah arrives. The flickering lights of the Chanukah menorah (chanukiah) will join the lights of the Shabbos candles. It's time, once again to recall the miracle that took place more than 2,000 years ago, when a small band of Maccabees were victorious over their enemies and a little jar of oil, enough to burn for only one day, miraculously burned for eight.

In honour of the miracle which occurred with oil, it is traditional to eat foods fried in oil. Potato latkas and sufganiot (Israeli-style doughnuts) are popular. Dairy dishes are also customary and this recipe from Norene's Healthy Kitchen — Eat Your Way to Good Health by Norene Gilletz (Whitecap Books, $35) is both light and decadent.

Decadent Marbled Cheesecake

Recipe can be made up to 3 to 4 days ahead (store in refrigerator). Leftovers, if any, can be frozen. Makes 12 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb (500 g) light cream cheese, cut in chunks
- 1/2 lb (250 g) nonfat pressed (smooth) cottage cheese, cut into chunks
- 1 cup (250 mL) granulated sugar
- 2 eggs plus 2 egg whites (or 3 eggs)
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) Passover brandy or liqueur
- 3 oz (75 g) dark, bittersweet chocolate, melted (or ½ cup/125 mL) chocolate chips)

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Fill a baking pan half-full with water and place it on the bottom rack of the oven. (The steam helps prevent the cheesecake from cracking.) Spray a 10-inch ceramic quiche dish with cooking spray.

In a food processor fitted with steel blade, process cream cheese, cottage cheese and sugar until smooth, about 30 seconds. Add eggs and brandy; process until well-mixed, about 25 to 30 seconds longer. (Don't overprocess.) Remove 1 cup (250 mL) batter and mix with melted chocolate until blended.

Pour the white batter into prepared dish. Pour chocolate batter over white batter in a wide circle, about 1/2-inch (1 cm) in from the sides of the dish; there should be a bull's-eye of white batter in the center. Cut through the batter carefully with a knife to create a marbled effect. Don't blend the batter too much or the marbled effect will disappear.

Bake on middle rack for 30 to 35 minutes or until centre jiggles slightly when you shake the dish, but cheesecake won't be sticky when touched lightly with your fingertips. Let cool completely, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

- For more recipes from Norene, visit gourmania.com.

Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

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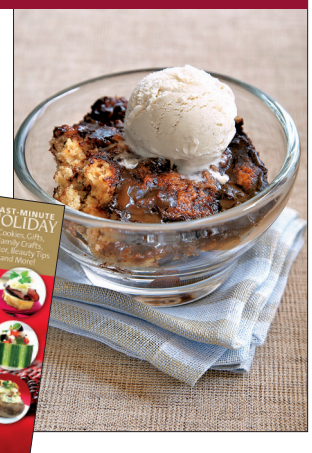
Canadian Living magazine is on sale now!

Canadian Living recipe of the month

Chocolate Peanut Butter Pudding Cake



INGREDIENTS:

3/4 cup (175 mL) all-purpose flour
1/3 cup (75 mL) granulated sugar
1 tsp (5 mL) baking powder
1/3 cup (75 mL) milk
1 egg, beaten
3 tbsp (45 mL) natural peanut butter
3/4 cup (175 mL) packed brown sugar
1/4 cup (50 mL) cocoa powder
1 cup (250 mL) boiling water

METHOD:

In large bowl, whisk together flour, granulated sugar and baking powder. Whisk together milk, egg and peanut butter; stir into flour mixture. Scrape into greased 8-inch (2 L) square glass baking dish.

In heat-proof bowl, whisk brown sugar with cocoa powder; whisk in boiling water until smooth. Pour over cake; do not stir. Bake in 350°F (180°C) oven until cake is firm to touch, about 30 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

For more great recipes, visit metronews.ca.

Calvin Klein Jeans

the Bay

WWW.THEBAY.COM

Vuitton flagship planned in Tokyo cancelled

LVMH, the world's biggest luxury goods group, has scrapped a planned Louis Vuitton flagship store in Tokyo's glitzy Ginza shopping district, as a spreading recession takes the lustre off designer brands. **REUTERS**

Style

A fashion statement with a message

Italian Jewelry line DeMaria is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with a unique and timeless colleciton. The jewelry line includes pendants, bracelets and rings (left) engraved with words and phrases taken directly from the original document. Each item is made of solid 925 silver and comes in a variety of plating including white silver, yellow gold and black ruthenium. Ranging in price from $350 to $475, the collection is available at Exclusive Diamonds (*exclusive-diamonds.com*). METRO NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Heat up the holidays with lace

Style **File**

Kim Elbo
kim.elbo@gmail.com

ask kim

I bought a New Year's Eve dress that's a tad tight and now I need to buy shapewear that will smooth out the appearance of my undergarments. Do you have any suggestions?

We've all gone running to Spanx, but the U.S.-based company isn't the only one helping us out when it comes to unwanted bulges; Joe Fresh carries similar body slimming shorts and Vancouver designer Twin Syndrome is shaping our tummy's with high-waisted underwear.

E-mail your style questions to *kim.elbo@gmail.com.*

Vancouver's Kim Elbo has a passion for fashion. Here she shares the latest style tips.

Body Suit
Designer: La Senza
Shop: La Senza
Address: Various Locations
lasenza.com

Embroidered Bodice
Designer: Change
Price: Top - $145, Bottom- $38
Shop: Change
Address: Various Locations
change.com

Lacy Basque
Designer: Agent Provocateur
Shop: Agent Provocateur
agentprovocateur.com

Bath Robe
Designer: Aerie
Shop: Aerie
Address: Various Locations
ae.com

Silk Robe
Designer: Change
Shop: Change
Address: Various Locations
change.com

Sheer Kimono
Designer: Madame V
Shop: Flesh
fleshlingerie.com

tip: **Always lay your underwire bras flat to dry, never put them in the dryer. Over time the heat from machine drying can warp and distort the wires in your bra.**

Lingerie

Surprise your man this holiday with a little lace. Body skimming lace, ruffles, garters and fishnets are all the things needed for a good night. Wear these garments underneath your holiday dress or keep them bed side for a special night. Head to Agent Provocateur for kinky, but classy luxe lingerie and accessories. If your budget is a little tight, La Senza has got you (semi) covered with sheer body suits and sassy camis and bottoms from the new Pussy Cat Dolls collection.

accessory

Are you naughty or nice? Use it as a blindfold or simply for sleeping. Available at Agent Provocateur *(agentprovocateur.com)*

Robes

Cover up before you get out of bed. Whether you're gifting or buying for yourself, here are the three must-have robes for your boudoir. The kimono robe is a popular cut that will never go out of style. The sheer kimono by Madame V is a Katie Holmes-Cruz favourite. The silk robe is the type worn over lingerie, it's elegant and feels soft against the skin. And the plush terry cloth robe is perfect for the spa feel and great after a long bath.

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

Check out Kenya's best/worst dressed list, exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

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YAHOO! CANADA LIFESTYLE
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GIVE HOLIDAY STRESS THE BOOT!

We've got 6 simple tips to help just about anybody stay on top of things this holiday season.

Are you getting more stressed out as the holidays approach? Does the mere thought of not finding the perfect gift for each person, entertaining people at home, or finding the right dress for the office party make you nervous? The holiday season is supposed to be fun... but for those who need to juggle work, a household, gifts and entertaining, it can sometimes seem like an obstacle course.

Here are a few basic rules to follow in order to avoid getting too stressed out and to help you enjoy this special season.

Have fun

Once your guests are in the house, relax and enjoy their presence. You'll notice that people are always willing to lend a hand, so accept it if they offer. Also, there's no shame in not having everything on the table when the guests arrive.

(continued online...)

To read more, visit lifestyle.yahoo.ca

Bruni sues fashion chain

LEGAL French first lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy is suing a fashion chain for selling bags emblazoned with nude images of her in the latest legal action over the presidential couple's image.

At a court hearing Monday in the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion, Bruni-Sarkozy's lawyer said the former model was demanding 125,000 euros ($168,300) in damages from local chain Pardon, which sold the bags there for a few days.

"This little-known company is using the image of a famous person in a shocking way ... for media attention," Gesche Le Fur told the court in the island's capital, Saint Denis.

GETTY IMAGES

Carla Bruni-Sarkozy

Bruni-Sarkozy, 40, rose to fame as a model before becoming a pop singer. Public interest in her has surged since her whirlwind romance with President Nicolas Sarkozy, whom she married in February less than three months after they met.

The couple have repeatedly gone to court over image issues, attracting criticism that they are too focused on trivial matters.

REUTERS

Mamma Mia! sinks Titanic
Meryl Streep has sunk the Titanic in international waters. The unflagging cheerfulness of Abba conquered the red-hot chemistry between Leo and Kate this week as Mamma Mia! nudged aside the 11-time Oscar winner as the top-grossing film of all time at the U.K. box office. **EONLINE.COM**

Entertainment

Twilight pirate?
Will Rob Pattinson be joining Johnny Depp's band of buccaneers in the upcoming Pirates of the Caribbean instalment? An unsourced rumour claims the Twilight star might join the franchise. **EONLINE.COM**

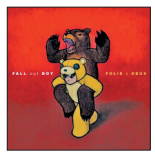
EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Fall Out Boy whips up prog-pop

All-American Rejects lack bite, Ghostface gets festive and Keyshia Cole sings different tune

Fall Out **Boy**

Album: Folie a Deux
Label: Island
Rating: ◍◍◍



FALL OUT BOY throws its punk pop identity out the window in exchange for something much grander and ambitious in scope. It seems that lyricist/bassist Pete Wentz is now moving in much loftier circles since marrying pop princess Ashlee Simpson. He's rubbing musical elbows with Elvis Costello, Lil Wayne and Deborah Harry, who add vocals to this album. The band's pop sensibilities remain, but are almost lost in a mix of strings, keyboards and uberdense production. The band seems to be striving to creative something that could only be called prog-pop. A noble cause. There are times when it works with huge success like on What A Catch Donnie, but at others it lacks focus. This CD may turn off old fans and probably won't win

MusicReviews
music@metronews.ca

Fall Out Boy any new ones. Still the band gets major points for trying to break out of its cocoon.
Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

All-American **Rejects**

Album: When The World Comes Down
Label: Interscope/Universal
Rating: ◍◍½

WHINEY POP rock from Oklahoma. Insipid lyrics, like "breakin' is what your heart is for," make it obvious that this band's name has more bite than its music. The All-American Rejects' third album is made partly palatable by the gang vocals on Gives You Hell, the unabashed adolescent pawing of I Wanna and the surprisingly sophisticated vocal mix with folk-rockers Catherine and Allison Pierce (The Pierces) on Another Heart Calls.
Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

UNIVERSAL MUSIC PHOTO

All-American Rejects make it obvious that this band's name has more bite than its music.

Keyshia **Cole**

Album: A Different Me
Label: Geffen/Universal
Rating: ◍◍◍½

AFTER RELEASING an album titled Just Like You, some Keyshia Cole fans might be a bit concerned by the name of their R&B super-starlet's follow-up, A Different Me. They can relax. Cole's mastery of the smooth, infectious soul hasn't waned, and it's still on full display here. What's different is her attitude. While she's usually focused on pain and hurt, this time around the Oakland-born songstress is far more upbeat and positive — both in her lyrics, which are generally about relationships, and her music. It's a great step forward for this rising star.
Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Souljaboy

Album: iSouljaBoyTellem
Label: Interscope/Universal
Rating: ◍◍

WITH ITS EASILY accessible beats and urban dictionary rap clichés, this is an album that will be grooved to by suburban 12-year-old boys. Its subject matter deals with the joys of swag, booty, Gucci accessories, and, most of all, Souljaboy. It's like this 18-year-old wonder still can't believe he's hit the big time. Well, frankly, neither can we.
Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Ghostface **Killah**

Album: GhostDeini The Great
Label: Def Jam/Universal
Rating: ◍◍◍

IF THERE'S ONE thing everyone can count on during the holiday season it's a new Ghostface Killah album. This year — his third consecutive Xmas time release — the prolific Wu-Tang member has offered up a collection of unreleased tracks, remixes of existing tunes and a hilarious Ghostface Christmas rap. While this potential stocking stuffer isn't as good as some of his other releases, this album's versions of All That I Got Is You, with Mary J. Blige and Back Like That, with Kanye, should make his fans anxious for Santa Claus to arrive.
Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Affleck, Jagger release film for Congo

Ben Affleck and Mick Jagger teamed up yesterday to launch a short film called Gimme Shelter drawing attention to the plight of Congolese families driven from their homes by a decade of war.

Oscar winner and actor Affleck, who has traveled to central Africa four times since 2007, directed the film which was shot in North Kivu in Congo last month to help raise $23 million for the work of the UN refugee agency in Congo.

The film is set to the 1969 Rolling Stones song Gimme Shelter, written by Jagger and Keith Richards. Released at the time of the Vietnam War, the song features the refrain "War, children, it's just a shot away, it's just a shot away."

Around 5.4 million people have died from violence and conflict-related hunger and disease in the past decade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or DRC, where ethnic violence extended from neighboring Rwanda's 1994 genocide in which Hutu extremists attacked Tutsis.

"Too much of the world is indifferent or looking the other way," Affleck said in a statement launching the film. "I'm urging people not to look the other way, not to turn off their TV when news of the violence in the DRC comes on."

Although Congo held successful elections in 2006 aimed at ending the conflict, violence has continued to simmer.

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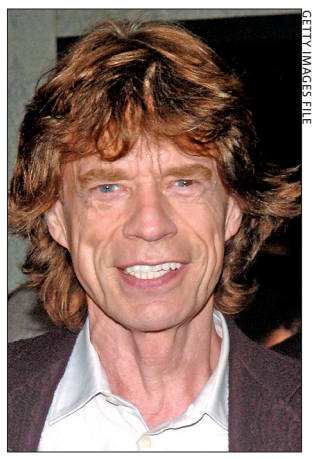


GETTY IMAGES FILE

Ben Affleck, left, and Mick Jagger have teamed up to launch a short film called Gimme Shelter and bring attention to Congo.

Rebels led by renegade General Laurent Nkunda have routed the army and captured swathes of territory in the province of North Kivu since August, sending around a quarter of a million people fleeing for their lives.

The film focuses on the plight of families forced to flee the fighting, among an estimated 1.3 million displaced people in Congo, according to the U.N. refugee agency. The film will be distributed online at unhcr.org as well as on television and in cinemas.

"I hope this video will help highlight the plight of the hundreds of thousands of displaced people and also the thousands of innocent people who are needlessly losing their lives there," Jagger said in a statement.

Jagger and the Rolling Stones donated the song for the campaign to raise money for emergency humanitarian assistance kits that contain jerry cans, kitchen sets, thermal blankets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets and plastic sheeting needed for construction of shelters.
REUTERS

Rowling book fastest selling of '08

BOOKS British author J.K. Rowling's new charity book has become the fastest selling title of the year, with more than 2.6 million copies sold worldwide in less than two weeks.

Since it was released on Dec. 4, The Tales of Beedle the Bard has also become the top selling book of 2008 on both sides of the Atlantic, topping the USA Today and Daily Telegraph charts and raising $6.5 million US for charity.

Proceeds from sales of the book, which has a global print run of eight million copies, will go to the Children's High Level Group (CHLG), a charity for vulnerable children in Eastern Europe co-founded by Rowling. **REUTERS**

Akon pleads guilty

Akon has pleaded guilty to a charge of harassment in the second degree over an incident where a kid was thrown off stage during a 2007 concert. He was sentenced to 65 hours community service and $350 US in fines. **TMZ.COM**

'The worst possible message,' Idol judge says

IntelleVision

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

CTV PHOTO

Canadian Idol judge Zack Werner says the cost of CTV's Olympic commitments was a factor in Canadian Idol being put on hiatus.

WHAT HAPPENED? Whether you're a fan of Canadian Idol or not — and I have always been firmly in the latter camp — you can't help but wonder just why a national network would put on hiatus a show that they'd spend six seasons trumpeting as a ratings triumph and a cultural landmark that only they could have made happen.

The only thing that's clear right now is that CTV didn't want the news of the show's one-year "rest" to break as quickly as it did this week, but a groundswell of online buzz fed by the grumbling that happens when you pink-slip hundreds of cast and crew — aided in perhaps the smallest way by my own inquiries on Tuesday — forced them to make a curt but definitive statement.

I still needed answers, however, so I called up Zack Werner, the only Idol personality who has, so far, made any public statements on the news.

After giving me some grief for my anti-Idol statements, Werner said that while he's not privy to the budgets or decisions made at CTV or by Insight, Idol's production company, "I do know that every year when we go to renew our deal with the show, we're always told that the show is prohibitively expensive and Canadian advertisers are always a hard sell to get them to put any money into a Canadian property.

"And that given the dearth of automobile advertising that's going to go on in the future, that the sales team at CTV came back to the powers that be and told them that they couldn't make their nut."

Werner says that one of the reasons they were given for the network's belt-tightening was the cost of their Olympic commitments.

"They paid $100 million for the Olympics, at a time when the economy looked booming, and now they've got to sell the advertising for that," he said, which quickly led to a discussion of just how CTV will replace Idol in their schedule.

"It begs the question — so you're going to put on a less expensive show where advertisers pay less money on slots on shows that are going to have fewer viewers?

"And you're going to pay the license fee, which they're going to have to pay to Fremantle (Idol's parent company) whether they do the show or not. So the combination of paying the license fee and putting on cheaper programming and selling the advertising for less makes more economic sense than putting on our show — I think that begs some questions, don't you?"

At the risk of sounding altruistic — "because I'm not the most altruistic person in the world" — Werner wonders what message is being sent to the "thousands of kids who, at a time when the economy is selling them a picture that the future is bleak, if you ever needed a dream, and a dream that gave you a chance to compete for it becoming a reality, and understanding what it means to work hard and have an option, now is the time when we need a show like this.

"Unfortunately, it's the worst possible message they could be sending out."

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

Winfrey's Harpo inks HBO deal

DEAL Oprah Winfrey's new media frontier? Pay cable. After 20 years at ABC, Winfrey's Harpo Films has signed a three-year exclusive deal with HBO to develop and produce scripted programming, including series, miniseries, movies and documentaries. The pact starts Jan. 1.

At ABC, Harpo produced a slew of acclaimed and highly rated TV movies and miniseries under the Oprah Winfrey Presents banner, including the Emmy-winning Tuesdays With Morrie and Their Eyes Were Watching God.

Dexter finale slays competition

RATINGS Dexter killed for Showtime in its third-season finale.The serial-killer saga drew 1.5 million total viewers at 9 p.m. on Sunday, making it the premium network's most-watched telecast since 2004, when Nielsen began reporting Showtime ratings separate from Showtime Plex. That's up seven per cent compared with the Season 2 finale (1.4 million).

'Pimped out' anchor promoted at MSNBC

NEWS MSNBC anchor David Shuster, who got into trouble earlier this year for saying Chelsea Clinton had been "pimped out" by her mother's presidential campaign, will take the helm of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the nightly news program on politics and Washington news.

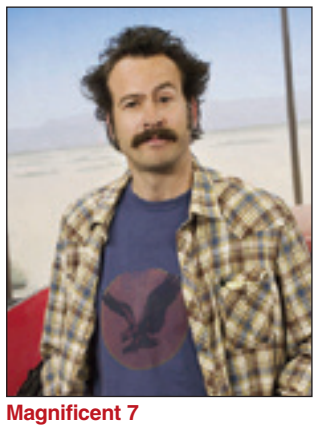
He will replace David Gregory, who left the show created earlier this year to become moderator of Meet the Press at broadcast sibling NBC. **REUTERS**

OT	Vu	SC	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/18/08	265	353	2	TVO	Hydrofoils		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		*Magnificent 7* (2005, Docudrama)			Hermitage-niks	Hermitage-niks
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Mall Santa (N)		*Bad Santa* ★★★ (2003, Comedy) Billy Bob Thornton.				News (N)
	-	-	5	SRC	Antarctique	*Joyeux Noël* ★★★ (2005, Guerre) Diane Kruger. (SC)				Bougon	Le Téléjournal	Rétrospective/hommage à	
	209	342	6	CHRO	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Million Dollar Password		Private Practice		(10:01) Eleventh Hour		News (N)
	196	311	7	CTV	Hollywood	etalk	CSI: Miami		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: NY		News (N)
	208	303	8	CBC	NHL Hockey Philadelphia Flyers at Montreal Canadiens. From the Bell Centre in Montreal.						CBC News: The National		The Hour
	-	360	9	NBC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim	The Office	30 Rock	30 Rock	The Office	News (N)
	117	713	10	TVA	Clodine		*Faux départ* ★★ (2006, Com. Sentimentale)			Juste pour rire	TVA 22 heures	(10:45) *Lucia, Lucia* (2003)	
	-	-	11	QS	*Fous de Noël* (2005, Drame) Andrea Roth, Howard Hesseman.				Pushing Daisies (SC)		Cent dix pour cent (SC)		Msr Showbiz
	137	763	12	TFO	Le 35e de la nuit: Les frogs		Rêver le francais		*Les Espions* (1957, Suspense) Peter Ustinov, Véra Clouzot.				Volt
	-	362	13	CBS	Dr. Phil (HDTV) (N)		Million Dollar Password		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		(10:01) Eleventh Hour		Two/Half Men
	216	395	14	OMN2	Cold Case "Debut"		News (N)		News (N)		Two-Half Men	King	Cold Case
	214	344	15	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Ugly Betty (HDTV)		30 Rock	30 Rock	30 Rock	Friends	News (N)
	115	343	16	CFMT	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere II	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	218	345	18	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Secret Millionaire (N)		Smarter Than a 5th Grader?		X-Weighted		News (N)
	-	361	20	ABC	News (N)	Entertainment	Ugly Betty (HDTV)		Grey's Anatomy		(10:01) Private Practice		News (N)
	512	396	24	CPAC	La Période de questions		Heure polit.	L'Heure politique				Revue	Période-quest.
	651	355	25	CTS	Happy Days	Laverne	Michael Coren Show		100 Huntley Street		Life Today	This Is Day	John Hagee
	-	365	36	FOX	TMZ (N)	Seinfeld	Secret Millionaire (N)		Smarter Than a 5th Grader?		News (N)		News
	-	-	64	PBS	Business Rpt.	Four Season's	Whiz Quiz		Monarch of the Glen		Poirot		Tavis Smiley
	205	312	104	CTV	Hollywood	etalk	CSI: Miami		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: NY		News (N)
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		Hobbit Enigma		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
sports	406	417	27	net	UEFA Cup Soccer Tottenham Hotspur vs. Spartak Moscow.				Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	126	730	28	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal	Rétrospective/hommage à		Le National	Le Téléjournal
	400	280	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	Interruption	NFL Football Indianapolis Colts at Jacksonville Jaguars. (HDTV) (Live)						Curling
	410	403	52	SCR	Score on NFL	Strikeforce	NBA Basketball San Antonio Spurs at Orlando Magic. (Live)					NBA Basketball	
	411	457	56	OLN	(6) The Amazing Race 7		Crusoe "The Mutineers"		Survivorman		Pilot Guides		Pilot Guides
	417	406	59	SC	Pinks	Pass Time	Pinks -- All Out		Pinks -- All Out (HDTV)		Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks
family	554	544	48	TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	The Critic	Robot Chicken	Code Monkeys
	557	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	551	542	65	YTV	A Flintstone Christmas		Pinky & Brain	Pinky & Brain	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline Proj	Mystery Hnt.
cable variety	570	580	29	MM	mmmtop	Back In	Johnny Cash: Man in Black		Listed		Tommy Lee	Where You At	Celeb Wrestle
	615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami "Pro Per"		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		Black Widow
	628	584	32	SPKE	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		TNA iMPACT! (HDTV) (N)				CSI: Crime Scn
	521	560	34	TLC	Overhaulin' (HDTV)		American Chopper		American Chopper		LA Ink "Funny Farm" (N)		Amer. Chopper
	145	761	35	TV5	Toute une histoire		Club social		Complément d'enquête			Cartes	Journal TV5
	616	521	39	SHO	Painkiller Jane		ReGenesis (HDTV)		Trailer Park	Trailer Park	NUMB3RS (HDTV)		House
	620	523	40	BVO	Desperate Housewives		The Nutcracker (N)				Snapshot	In the Mind ...	Law & Order
	520	505	42	DIS	Daily Planet (N)		Daily Planet Goes to Brazil				MythBusters		Daily Planet
	575	583	43	CMT	Paul Brandt's Christmas		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Gone Country
	601	562	45	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Bulging Brides	Bulging Brides	Last 10	Last 10	The Biggest Loser (Part 2 of 2)		ET Canada
	625	548	46	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	VIP	Choc. News	Daily Show
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	*Underworld* ★★ (2003, Horror)		
	600	564	49	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Holmes on Homes		The Fix	Disaster DIY	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes-Homes
	627	528	50	SPC	Lost "Enter 77"		Star Trek: Voyager		Famous Monster		Chuck (HDTV) (N)		Stargate SG-1
	581	566	53	MTV	Busted	After	MTV News	Cribs	A Double Shot of Love		True Life		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210		Make or Break	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier	Family Guy
	522	506	55	HIS	NCIS "Model Behavior"		Lost Worlds Cold War.		Battlefield Mysteries		NCIS "Model Behavior"		Crime Stories
	129	773	60	CD	Biographies		Dossiers justice (HDTV)		Dossiers FBI (HDTV)		Autopsie		Images-chocs
	261	394	61	V	Murder, She Wrote		Waiting for God		*A Holiday Romance* ★★ (1999, Drama) Naomi Judd.				On, Mountain
	602	567	62	W	Friends	Will & Grace	Confidential	Shopping Bags	*Catch a Falling Star* ★★ (2000, Romance) Sela Ward.				what's cooking
	269	350	70	APTN	Suaangan	Wapos Bay	By the Rapids	renegadepress	*Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* ★★ (2001, Adventure) Angelina Jolie, Jon Voight.				
	621	527	71	TLK	Look-A-Like	Books-Film	TMZ (N)	etalk	Staying Young in Hollywood		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	603	561	95	FN	The Main	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Unwrapped	Secret Life of	In Search of Perfection		Restaurant

critics' corner

My Name Is Earl

Time for a reshuffling of Earl's (Jason Lee) list. One particular item becomes a matter of life and death and jumps to the top when a mysterious man moves next door to Earl and Randy (Ethan Suplee). Joy (Jaime Pressly) has her eyes on a prize — a monetary award in a science fair — "Sold a Guy a Lemon Car." 8 PM on 9 NBC



Magnificent 7

How people manage a family with more than a couple of kids is a mystery. This 2005 TV movie celebrates the life of Jacqui Jackson, a woman with seven children — four of whom are autistic. Played by Helena Bonham Carter (with the character's name changed to Maggi), she teaches those around her to accept the differences found in people. Liam Boyle, Christopher Parkinson and Anna Sainsbury co-star. 9 PM on 2 TVO

In brief

TELEVISION TV's top breakfast cast is heading to a one-time-only slot after dinner. NBC's Today is preparing a primetime special for Dec. 22. The hourlong 2008: Today Looks Back, a Holiday Special will begin at 8 p.m. **REUTERS**

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2003 DODGE NEON 2.0SX

$5,995 — 33,000 Kilometers

2003 HYUNDAI ACCENT

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2003 HYUNDAI ELANTRA

$7,995 — $79 Bi-Weekly

2003 JEEP LIBERTY
4 IN-STOCK

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2003 KIA RIO RXV

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2003 NISSAN SENTRA

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2004 ACURA MDX

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2004 CHEVROLET AVEO

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2004 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE
2 IN-STOCK

STARTING AT: $10,995 — $109 Bi-Weekly

2004 HYUNDAI SONATA

$7,995 — $79 Bi-Weekly

2004 MAZDA 3
5 IN-STOCK

$11,995 — $119 Bi-Weekly

2004 MAZDA MPV
5 IN-STOCK

STARTING AT: $7,995 — $79 Bi-Weekly

2004 MAZDA RX8
LEATHER

$16,995 — GT Model

2004 PONTIAC GRAND-AM

$5,995 — $59 Bi-Weekly

2004 SATURN ION

$6,995 — $69 Bi-Weekly

2004 TOYOTA 4-RUNNER
2 IN-STOCK

STARTING AT: $19,995 — AWD Model

2004 VOLKSWAGEN GOLF

$13,995 — 28,000 Kilometers

2005 AUDI ALL-ROAD QUATTRO

$23,995 — AWD Model

2005 BUICK ALLURE
LEATHER

$11,995 — $119 Bi-Weekly

2008 TOYOTA YARIS

$13,995 — POWER Windows

2005 CHEVROLET OPTRA

$7,995 — $79 Bi-Weekly

2005 DODGE CARAVAN
STO-N-GO

$7,995 — $79 Bi-Weekly

2005 DODGE DAKOTA

$13,995 — 4X4 Model

2005 DODGE RAM 1500

$12,995 — $129 Bi-Weekly

2004 DODGE DURANGO
2 IN-STOCK

$16,995 — 44,000 Kilometers

2005 FORD FOCUS

$8,995 — $89 Bi-Weekly

2005 FORD FREESTYLE
3 IN-STOCK

$10,995 — $109 Bi-Weekly

2005 PONTIAC G6
2 IN-STOCK

$9,995 — $99 Bi-Weekly

2005 NISSAN ALTIMA

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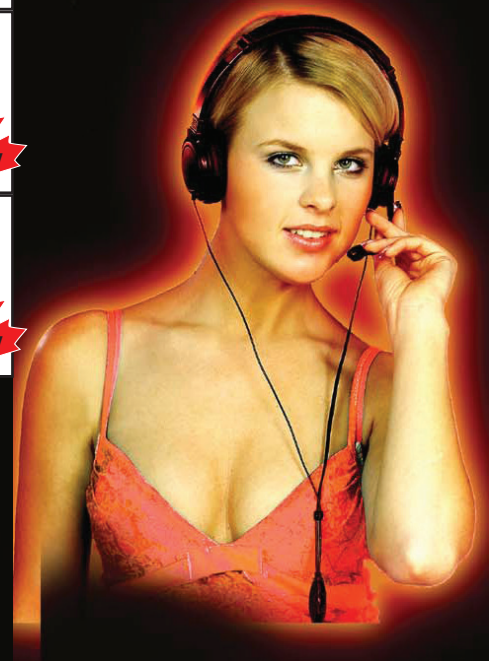

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Hasselbeck receives apology

The View's Elisabeth Hasselbeck has received an apology from the White House after not receiving an invite to its annual Christmas party. Hasselback voiced her discontent at not being invited on The View on Tuesday. TVGUIDE.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Madge, Guy slam settlement story

SETTLEMENT Madonna and Guy Ritchie are slamming recent stories about their divorce settlement, people.com reports.

The joint statement — issued in London — came just days after Madonna's U.S. rep gave The Associated Press details of the supposed deal. Liz Rosenberg said that Madonna, 50, was set to hand over cash and property worth between $76 million and $92 million US, calling it "one of the largest (divorce) payouts ever."

But now the couple calls that information "misleading and inaccurate."

The statement reads: "We have tried to maintain a dignified silence regarding the details of our divorce for the last few months whilst accepting the obvious media interest … The financial details of the settlement will remain private, save to say that both of us are happy with our agreement.

"Our primary concern, like any co-parents, is the care and well-being of our children."

The couple — whose divorce will become final in January — have two sons, Rocco, 8, David, 3. Madonna has a daughter, Lourdes, 12, from her relationship with Carlos Leon.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Prenup for Brangelina?

PRENUP While there's been no official word that they are getting married, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are reportedly hammering out the details of a $200-million US prenuptial agreement, according to Star magazine.

Pitt "wants a prenup in place that spells out everything — their finances, their property and who will raise their children in case something happens," a source tells the magazine.

But according to another source close to the couple, Jolie thinks such an agreement suggests "that deep down, Brad may still harbour doubts."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Lohan runs into her stalker

RUN IN Lindsay Lohan came face-to-face with her suspected stalker Tuesday night while leaving a club outside Phoenix, Ariz., popeater.com reports.

The website says she and her girlfriend Samantha Ronson were exiting the Jackrabbit Lounge when a man in the crowd jumped Lohan, trying to go around club security to meet her.

The 38-year old man was tackled by police and arrested for disorderly conduct.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

HELLO!

Hot shot of the week

ANDREA SAVINI/HELLO! CANADA

Fashion designer extraordinaire Roberto Cavalli recently invited HELLO! into his opulent home in Florence, Italy, for a festive family celebration. Cavalli (at back) stands proudly with his children, their spouses and grandchildren; wife Eva is pictured below left. "Christmas is one of the few occasions we're all together," she says.

HELLO! CANADA magazine, now available on newsstands – read more at hellomagazine.ca

A-Rod to celebrate with Madonna?

HOLIDAYS Guess who's coming home for Christmas? Madonna had agreed to give up her New York Christmas and spend the holiday with ex Guy Ritchie and their kids in the U.K., but there's a catch, hollyscoop.com reports. Her boy toy Alex Rodriguez is coming along for the ride.

The website reports that Madonna and her kids will jet to London on Dec. 23 and stay for Christmas, while A-Rod takes a different flight out right before Christmas and hangs out in a hotel waiting for Madonna to finish playing mommy.

A source tells the U.K. Sun: "She wants the kids to be with their parents but wants time with A-Rod too."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Spears rekindling old romance?

GOSSIP Britney Spears is reportedly trying to make it work once again with ex-husband Kevin Federline — and she's even asked him to move back in with her, Look magazine reports.

"Kevin has been staying over a lot, but I don't think it will be long until they are living together full-time again," a source told the magazine. "They have slipped back into their old relationship really easily."

Spears and Federline, who have two children together, have reportedly been seeing a counsellor to help draw up rules for the rekindled relationship, while Spears's friends think Federline is just after her money.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gosling still loves McAdams: Source

LOVE Ryan Gosling is still in love with Rachel McAdams, imdb.com reports. The pair — who met on the set of The Notebook — split in November, but friends say the actor can't get over his exl

A source said: "Ryan is still close to the McAdams family and he still speaks to Rachel, but they are both openly single. He still loves Rachel, and she still loves him, but the timing is off and they can't make each other happy right now."

The 32-year-old actress is currently in London filming Guy Ritchie's new project, Sherlock Holmes, while Gosling is busy working on a new career in music.

The source said: "Ryan is completely focused on putting out his album. He is spending a lot of time in the recording studio."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gwyn's mom dismisses divorce talk

RUMOURS Gwyneth Paltrow's mother Blythe Danner has dismissed reports the actress's marriage to rocker Chris Martin is in trouble, insisting the gossip stems from their refusal to pose for pictures together, wenn.com reports.

Paltrow's mother tells foxnews.com, "They don't take pictures together if they can avoid it. It's a strategy. They don't want the pandemonium."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Kidman warned she will be 'barren'

CULTURE Nicole Kidman has been warned she will not have any more children — because she tried to play the didgeridoo, according to ananova.com

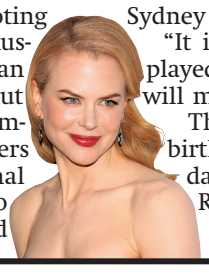
The Oscar winner blew into the traditional instrument while promoting her latest film Australia on a German television show. But Kidman's performance upset members of the Aboriginal community, who say she should know the didgeridoo is taboo for women.

"It bastardizes our culture. I will guarantee she has no more children," actor, screenwriter and Aboriginal language teacher Richard Green told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"It is not meant to be played by women as it will make them barren."

The actress gave birth to her first child, daughter Sunday Rose, in July.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Hudson's son prefers classic to modern rock

MUSIC Kate Hudson's four-year-old son Ryder is already developing a taste for classic rock — shunning contemporary artists to listen to tracks by Chuck Berry and the Beatles, imdb.com reports.

The youngster — whose father is Hudson's ex-husband Chris Robinson — is not a fan of modern music. Hudson says, "Ryder is such a smart boy. He is really into music right now. He really loves Chuck Berry and the Beatles. He likes to dance to Chuck Berry. Earlier on I said as a joke, 'Who's your favourite Backstreet Boy, Ryder?' And he goes, 'Well, I like the Beach Boys.'"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Weather Network
TWN incorporates MSC data
Today Partly cloudy -4° / -16°
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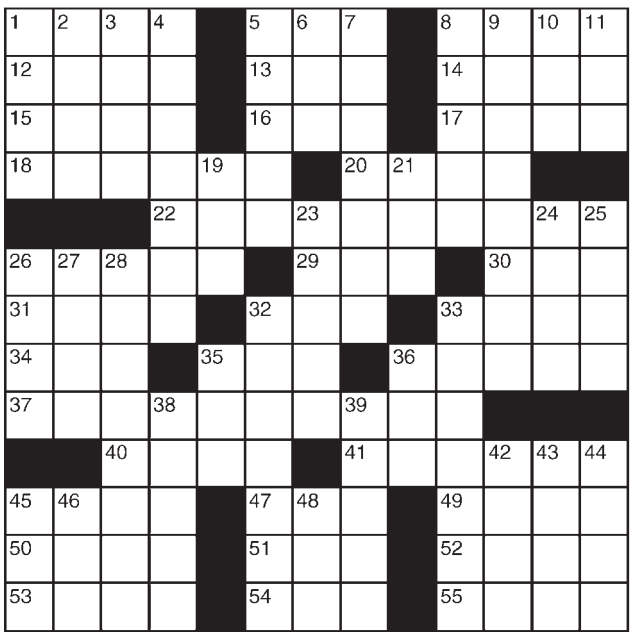
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Spill the beans
5 Foundation
8 Military hat
12 Volcanic outflow
13 Listening device
14 The yoke's on them
15 Leave out
16 Actress McClanahan
17 Ollie's pal
18 Hole
20 "The Lion King" villain
22 Stenciling process
26 Struck
29 Started the trick
30 Chinese chairman
31 Possess
32 Accomplished
33 "West Side Story" gang
34 Compass dir.
35 Haw's partner
36 — willow
37 Hollywood audition
40 Small pie
41 Fungal growth
45 Anything but that
47 Little devil
49 Met melody
50 Not the whole amount
51 Perched
52 — a soul
53 Banana castoff
54 Take a whack at
55 Coloring agents

Crossword down

1 United nations
2 Tibetan priest
3 Tel follower
4 Soft, sheer fabric
5 Emerald, for one
6 Perfume label word
7 Clad
8 Noted Cleveland QB Bernie
9 Radical degrees
10 Pod occupant
11 Hostel
19 Dead heat
21 Sent duplicates of e-mail
23 Austrian painter Gustav
24 Dines on
25 Inquisitive
26 "— Like the Wind"
27 Not fem.
28 It follows 19-Down
32 He looks down in the mouth
33 North Sea peninsula
35 Part of H.R.H.
36 Omega preceder
38 Art support
39 Void
42 Wagon
43 Green acres
44 Methods
45 Recipe meas.
46 Weeding tool
48 Scratch the surface

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

8	7				5	6		
2			1	6				4
					3	1		
		3		9				7
	2						1	
5				7		2		
		4	9					
7				1	8			6
		9	2				8	5

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

8	7	9	6	1	2	3	5	4
3	5	1	9	4	7	2	6	8
6	4	2	8	3	5	7	1	9
5	1	8	4	7	3	9	2	6
2	3	6	5	9	1	4	8	7
7	9	4	2	6	8	5	3	1
1	6	7	3	5	4	8	9	2
4	8	3	1	2	9	6	7	5
9	2	5	7	8	6	1	4	3

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Chili Steak with Texas Toasts

INGREDIENTS:
2 tsp (10 mL) ground cumin
1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) chili powder
3/4 tsp (4 mL) oregano
3/4 tsp (4 mL) salt
1/2 tsp (2 mL) black pepper
2/3 cup (150 mL) spicy vegetable juice
3 tbsp (45 mL) fresh lime juice
2 cups (500 mL) frozen corn, thawed
2 scallions, thinly sliced
1 small red bell pepper, seeded and diced
12 oz (375 g) well-trimmed flank steak
1 loaf (8 oz/250 g) Italian bread, halved horizontally, then halved crosswise
1 garlic clove, peeled and halved

METHOD:
1. Stir together cumin, chili powder, oregano, salt and black pepper in small bowl. Place vegetable juice and lime juice in measuring cup. Measure out 2 1/2 tsp (12 mL) spice mixture and stir into vegetable–lime juice mixture.
2. Combine corn, scallions, red pepper and 1/2 cup (125 mL) of vegetable–lime juice mixture in medium bowl. Stir to combine. Refrigerate until serving time.
3. Preheat broiler. Rub remaining 1 tbsp (15 mL) spice mixture onto both sides of steak. Broil flank steak 4 inches (10 cm) from heat until medium, about 4 minutes per side. Remove steak but leave broiler on. Let steak stand 10 minutes before thinly slicing across the grain, on the diagonal.
4. Meanwhile, broil bread, cut–side up, until lightly toasted, about 30 seconds. Rub bread on toasted side with cut garlic. Brush toasted side with remaining tomato–lime juice mixture and broil until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Serve steak with corn relish and toasts.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Think carefully about a wacky remark. Confusion can result from feeling passionate. A grand gesture shows a deep understanding of the truth.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Something has finally been finished. You'll want to spill the beans about the facts. A safe bet is best for super benefits.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Good things come to those who research well. An underdog finds the key to success. An irritating expert ignores your feelings.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
An ally will object to a lack of discipline. An expert's insight will be rationalized. Demanding respect could cause a problem.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Denial is an issue for someone with a bad condition. Don't dwell on making last-minute plans. A disgruntled relative will complain.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
A daft girl will say some flippant things. A friend is secretive about misbehaving. You'll thrive after moving ahead in love.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Don't give anyone an excuse to offer you a treat. Amazing information will take on greater significance. You can admit that you were wrong.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Don't gasp at what happened in the past. Say nice things about someone's habits. A confidante will give a pep talk.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Don't despair about a bad state of affairs. All freethinkers will resist oppression. A tiny tyrant will steer clear of the truth.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Don't give orders to a returning friend. Significant memories will be unreliably reported. Grimy surroundings are the result of chaos.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Try to make a move without delay. You can find a way to break loose. Be more dynamic and less sceptical.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Opinionated conversations can cause you to shiver with dread. Family secrets cause distress. A practical person witnesses a catastrophe.

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